NOVEMBER 2021

# Reader's Digest

## What a (ROAD) TRIP!

*By* RD READERS

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# DELETE YOUR INTERNET FOOTPRINT

## 13 Things About the Dark Web

*By* MICHELLE CROUCH

## Why Winter Skin Is So Dry

*From* THE HEALTHY.COM

## Friends, INDEED

*From the book*
WE NEED TO HANG OUT

## Inside the Florida Condo Collapse

A DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

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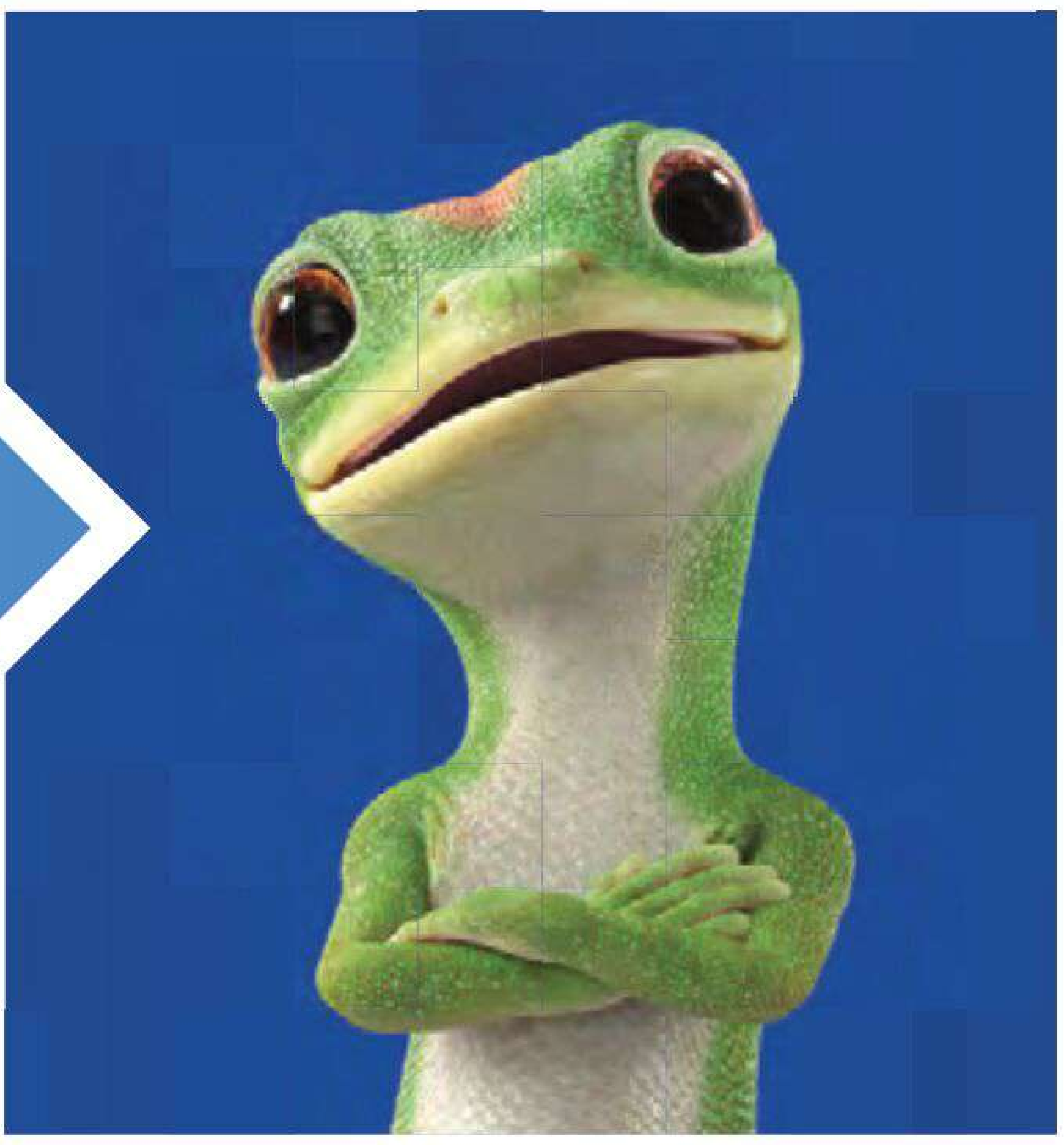

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# Reader's Digest
A Trusted Friend in a Complicated World

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**COVER STORY**

### DELETE YOUR INTERNET FOOTPRINT*

With spies everywhere, keep yourself safe with these 25 smart steps.

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

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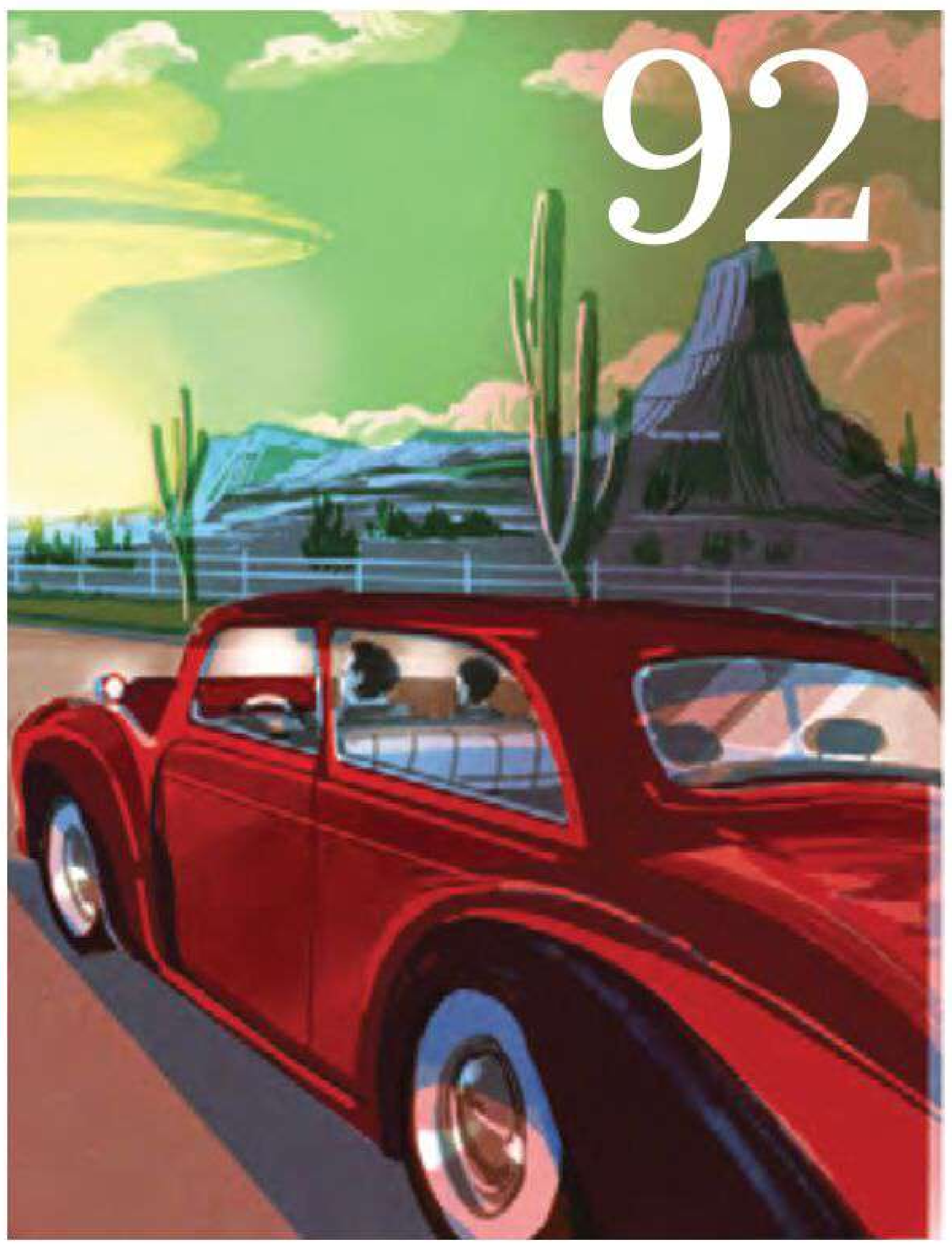
**SPECIAL REPORT**

### The Nicest Places in America*

Take a trip with us to places where good people are making good things happen.

BY *RD* EDITORS



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In the middle of the night, as most of the tenants slept, much of a 12-story Florida condominium collapsed, killing scores and sending survivors fleeing for their lives. But amid the rubble and dust, heroes appeared as neighbor reached out to neighbor

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FROM TOP: SERGE BLOCH. WRAGG/GETTY IMAGES

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†Nicholas Hall's global CHC database, DB6, 2019 value sales at MSP

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### DEAR READER

# Getting in the Spirit

WHERE I COME from, “nice” is just about the biggest compliment you can receive. “Iowa Nice” is an honor we vie with Minnesota to claim—but we don’t fight over it, of course. This summer it was affirming to hear people around the country sing the praises of my home state after the first Major League Baseball game played at the Field of Dreams aired on national TV.

So what does this have to do with the Headless Horseman? Well, I know a nice place when I see one, and I’ve landed near the village of Sleepy Hollow, New York. (Yes, it’s a real place!) In fact, Sleepy Hollow used to be called North Tarrytown until residents voted to adopt its more famous moniker in honor of local literary star Washington Irving, author of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, featuring the infamous horseman.

Every fall, our towns fill up with people who come for all the Halloween happenings—and they find a community vibe that’s far from terrifying. It’s downright friendly. A parade where anyone can dress in costume, or not, and march. Businesses that roll out the orange carpet. Friendly people, who will kindly direct you to the cemetery for a haunted history lesson. It’s just a seasonal extension of the countless instances of people coming together and helping each other all year long.

In the spirit of all this good-spiritedness, I’ll say that it’s not easy choosing the Nicest Places in America, as I have helped to do for the past four years. But it’s some of the most uplifting work imaginable. Come along as we visit this year’s crop of Nicest Places, starting on page 65. And if you live in or know about another nice place, we’d love to hear about it.

*Jody L. Rohlena,*
DEPUTY EDITOR

**Write to me at letters@rd.com.**

FROM TOP: JAMES KIRKIKIS/SHUTTERSTOCK. MATTHEW COHEN

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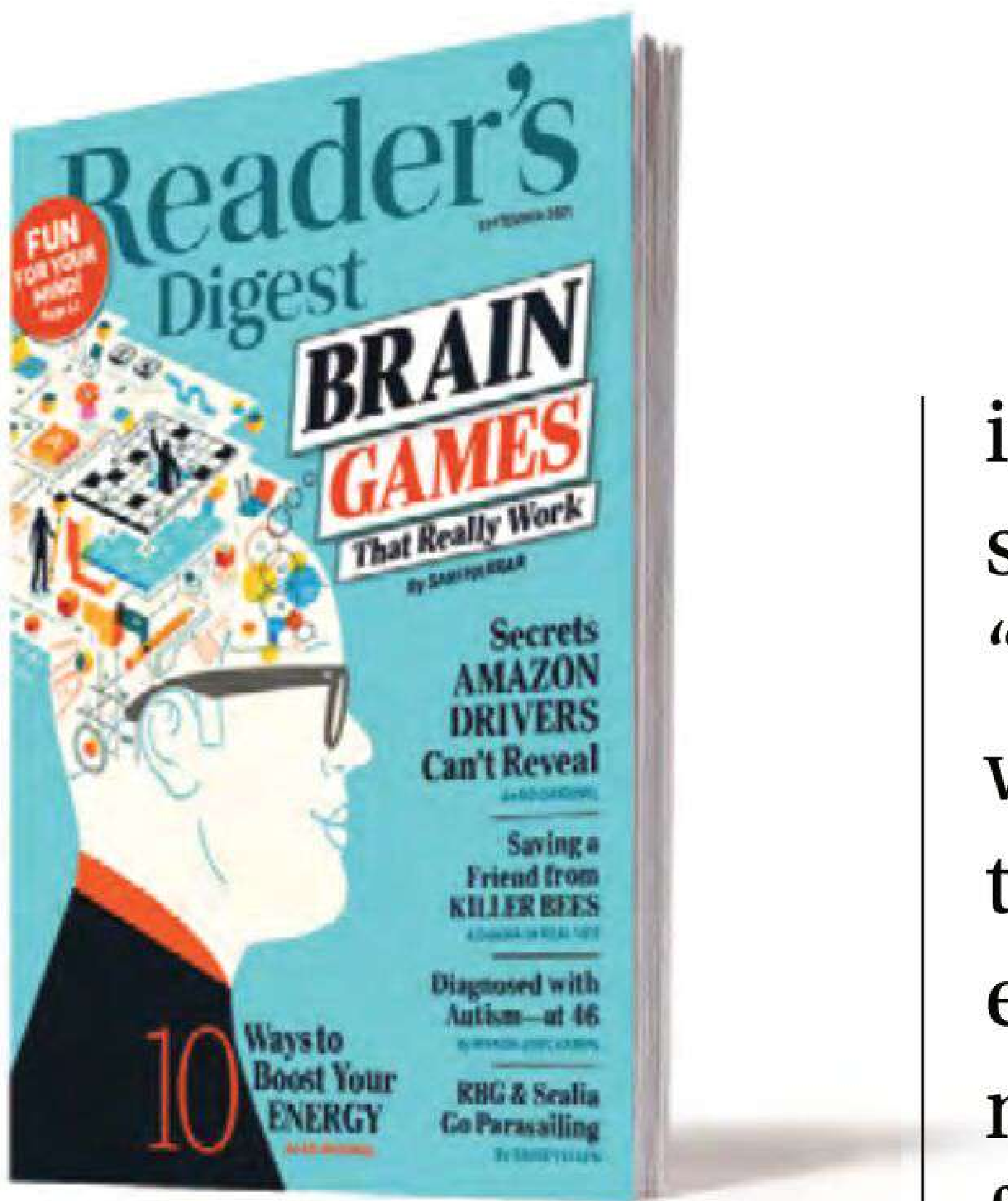
# LETTERS

NOTES ON THE *September* ISSUE


Reader's Digest
FUN FOR YOUR MIND!
BRAIN GAMES
That Really Work
Secrets AMAZON DRIVERS Can't Reveal
Saving a Friend from KILLER BEES
Diagnosed with Autism—at 46
10 Ways to Boost Your ENERGY
RBG & Scalia Go Parasailing

## Brain Games That Really Work

Years ago, I began forgetting things after returning from a trip to Australia. My husband took me to the emergency room, and four days later I awakened from a coma with a diagnosis that required me to exercise my brain. I tried to read but couldn't understand what I was reading. But my bridge partners had me count points in aces, kings, queens, and jacks. And it worked! I just became a Gold Life Master in bridge.

—CAROL SZAZYNSKI *Clearwater, Florida*

### Everyday Heroes

When I turned to "Stepping Up to the Plate" and read "A longtime baseball card collector seizes the opportunity to do good after a destructive wildfire," I questioned how much good you could do after a natural disaster with a bunch of baseball cards. Then I kept reading and saw the magic. A man with a lot more heart than most did something I know I never would've. It takes courage to give away $35,000 in baseball cards to strangers.

—QUIRINIUS TAZE PETERS
*Modesto, California*

### My Autism Diagnosis, at Age 46

Like Wanda Deschamps, I was diagnosed with autism later in life, at age 51. I had spent years unable to "fit in" at school and work. Adults with autism can be excellent employees. Early diagnosis can make a profound difference in many people's lives. Thank you for spreading the word.

—TERESA LEDBETTER
*Garland, Texas*

### A Thousand Stings

The Drama in Real Life story of Doug April climbing up a rock face to save his friend from a swarm of killer bees gave me goose bumps. One thousand bee stings doesn't seem survivable, but I'm glad Ian Cappelle is alive to tell the tale. April is a hero in my book.

—EMILEE JASKOWIAK
*Bethel, Ohio*

### True Stories

I enjoyed "The Mother of All Broken Records," a true story about a woman who asks her daughter to tell her if she begins repeating herself the way her own mother does, to which

RD PHOTO STUDIO

her daughter assures her, "Yes, you've already told me this."

I read the story to my daughters. One asked me, "Did you send that in?" The other said, "Yeah, I was thinking that too."

—ALICE MARCUS SOLOVY
*Highland Park, Illinois*

### Word Power

I have two more to add to your collection of names that stem from trades. A cooper is a person who makes barrels. In Hungary, Kovacs (like the comedian Ernie Kovacs) is about as common a last name as Smith is in the United States—because a smith in Hungarian is a kovacs.

—DANIEL LINDSAY
*Hilo, Hawaii*

### Where, Oh Where

As a proud Utah resident, I was excited to see a photo of our beautiful wind-sculpted sandstone Wave in "Where, Oh Where." But I was shocked to find that Arizona was your answer as to its location. The Wave is located in Utah, just north of the Utah/Arizona border. Arizona would undoubtedly like to claim it, but it is ours!

—TOM BARKUME
*Wellsville, Utah*

FROM THE EDITORS: *A representative from the Bureau of Land Management confirms that while the trail that leads to the Wave begins in Utah, it crosses into Arizona before reaching the Wave.*

## PRIME MOVERS

✦ In Michelle Crouch's list of Amazon facts, number 13 states that people often break into smiles when they see Amazon delivery vans pull up outside. My grandson Jaxton gets so excited with any Amazon package that arrives that my daughter got him a birthday cake made to look like an Amazon box.

**—Cheryl Steiner**
HOLMESVILLE, OHIO

✦ I thoroughly enjoyed your list of 13 things Amazon drivers won't tell you, until, much to my dismay, I realized that there was no number 14: "Why I place your largest packages directly in front of your outward-opening door."

**—P.H.** VIA RD.COM

## The Power of Memory

The brain is a powerful yet finicky thing. Scents, songs, phrases, or places can bring back memories long-forgotten. What surprising trigger has recovered a memory you'd thought was lost to the sands of time? What random occurrence made you remember something you'd completely forgotten about a loved one? What's the first memory you've kept from early childhood? Please share your story with us and see terms at **rd.com/memory**. We might publish it in an upcoming issue.

RICHVINTAGE/GETTY IMAGES. RD PHOTO STUDIO (PHOTO FRAME)

EVERYDAY HEROES

# Screen Saver

*As the lost hiker grew desperate, a stranger with an unusual pastime was trying to rescue him*

BY *Sydney Page*
FROM **THE WASHINGTON POST**

RENE COMPEAN WAS no stranger to Angeles National Forest. He'd hiked the park near his home in Southern California numerous times. But after venturing along a new path last April, the 45-year-old mechanic was lost.

As the day faded into dusk, following several hours of aimless roaming, his concern turned to fear. The terrain was remote and rugged. With no flashlight, only a liter of water and a power bar in his backpack, and less than ten percent battery remaining on his cell phone, Compean was unprepared for anything more than the two-hour trek he'd planned.

Compean climbed to a spot, some 7,000 feet above sea level, where he found at least one bar of signal. "SOS. My phone is going to die. I'm lost," he texted a friend, attaching a photo showing where he was. The shot showed his soot-stained legs hanging over a steep cascade of rocks.

All Compean could do then was wait and hope. The temperature was dropping fast, and the winds were whipping. Dressed only in a tank top, shorts, and a hoodie, the hiker was chilled to the bone. He hugged himself into a tight ball, using his backpack to shield his bare legs from the frigid gusts that pounded him. But he wouldn't sleep. After spotting two mountain lions and a bear, he spent the night on high alert, keeping a big stick and some sharp rocks beside him in case an animal came close.

Sixty miles away in Ventura County,

PHOTOGRAPH BY *Jose Mandojana*

"I bet I can find the spot," Ben Kuo thought when he saw the photo of the missing hiker.

Ben Kuo was working at home when he read a tweet from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, showing a grainy image of a man's legs. The sheriff's search-and-rescue teams had spent the previous night unsuccessfully looking for Compean, so they released the photo to the public, hoping someone might know the location.

Kuo, then 47, works in the tech industry, and he has an unusual hobby: "I have always loved looking for where photos are taken," he says.

**AFTER SPOTTING MOUNTAIN LIONS AND A BEAR, HE SPENT THE NIGHT ON HIGH ALERT.**

He frequently tries to identify where movie scenes, television shows, or commercials were filmed. He's often successful. When he saw the blurry image of Compean's legs surrounded by an endless landscape of rocks and vegetation, he instinctively pulled up a satellite map on his laptop. The sheriff's department said Compean's car was parked near Buckhorn Campground, so he narrowed his search to the surrounding area.

"There's an amazing amount of information you can get from satellites," says Kuo. The first thing he noticed in Compean's photo were patches of greenery. After comparing it to the satellite map, Kuo realized something: "He's got to be on the south side because there's not really any green valleys on the north side."

That finding tightened his search, leading him to an area that resembled the terrain in the image. The final step was cross-referencing the original photo with 3-D images of the area from Google Earth. The locations matched!

He quickly called the sheriff's department with the latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates supplied by Google Earth. Soon, a search-and-rescue team helicopter was in the air, hovering above Compean.

After spending 27 hours alone in the wilderness, Compean cried, "I'm safe!"

Days later, the two men met via Zoom, where they made a plan to meet in person. "Maybe we'll go on a hike," Compean joked. Getting serious, he told Kuo, "I owe you my life."

Sgt. John Gilbert, of the sheriff's department, agrees. Compean's story probably would have ended very differently had a total stranger with strong satellite skills and a sharp eye for detail not taken action.

"Ben's help allowed us to get to that location much sooner than we probably would have," Gilbert says.

In fact, when Compean was finally pulled safely into the helicopter, one of his rescuers, unable to yell over the din of the rotors, wrote on a piece of paper, "You are so lucky."

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# The Book Lady

BY *Andy Simmons*

It was Jennifer Williams's mother who got her hooked on books. A librarian, she read to her three children every day. "Not until we went to kindergarten," Williams told vadogwood.com, a local news site. "Until we went to college."

**Williams and a few of her books**

COURTESY JENNIFER HOGE WILLIAMS

When Williams, now 54, became an elementary school teacher and tutor in Danville, Virginia, she wanted her students to fall in love with reading just as she had. But early on, she realized that some kids had limited access to books.

"It's very obvious to teachers of young children which kids are read to versus kids who are not," she said. "It's obvious at the end of the first day of school." To Williams, the solution was simple: Give kids books. In 2017, as part of a civic event called Engage Danville, she gave away 900 used children's books over three days. Most people would be satisfied with that. Most.

"I was like, 'Anybody could do that,'" she said. "I wanted to do something that's going to stretch my faith, my work ethic, my everything."

So she raised the ante considerably by setting a new goal for herself: Give away one million books. It sounds like an unreachable number, but as Williams posted on Facebook: "Don't complain in the bleachers if you aren't willing to work hard out on the field."

So she got to work, first by roping in friends to donate books or money to buy books. Before long, as news of Williams's project spread, strangers started leaving bundles of books on her front porch. As quickly as the books come in, Williams gives them to local schools—free of charge—and also supplies books to little free libraries around the city of 41,000 just over the North Carolina border. She also hosts a book club for inmates in the local jail.

In the four years she's been doing all this, the Book Lady, as Williams has come to be known, has given away more than 78,000 books—only 922,000 more to reach her goal! And she's not slowing down. It's too important for kids with few options.

"Reading can take you anywhere," she told CNN. "You can travel in time and space. If you can read, you can learn almost anything." R

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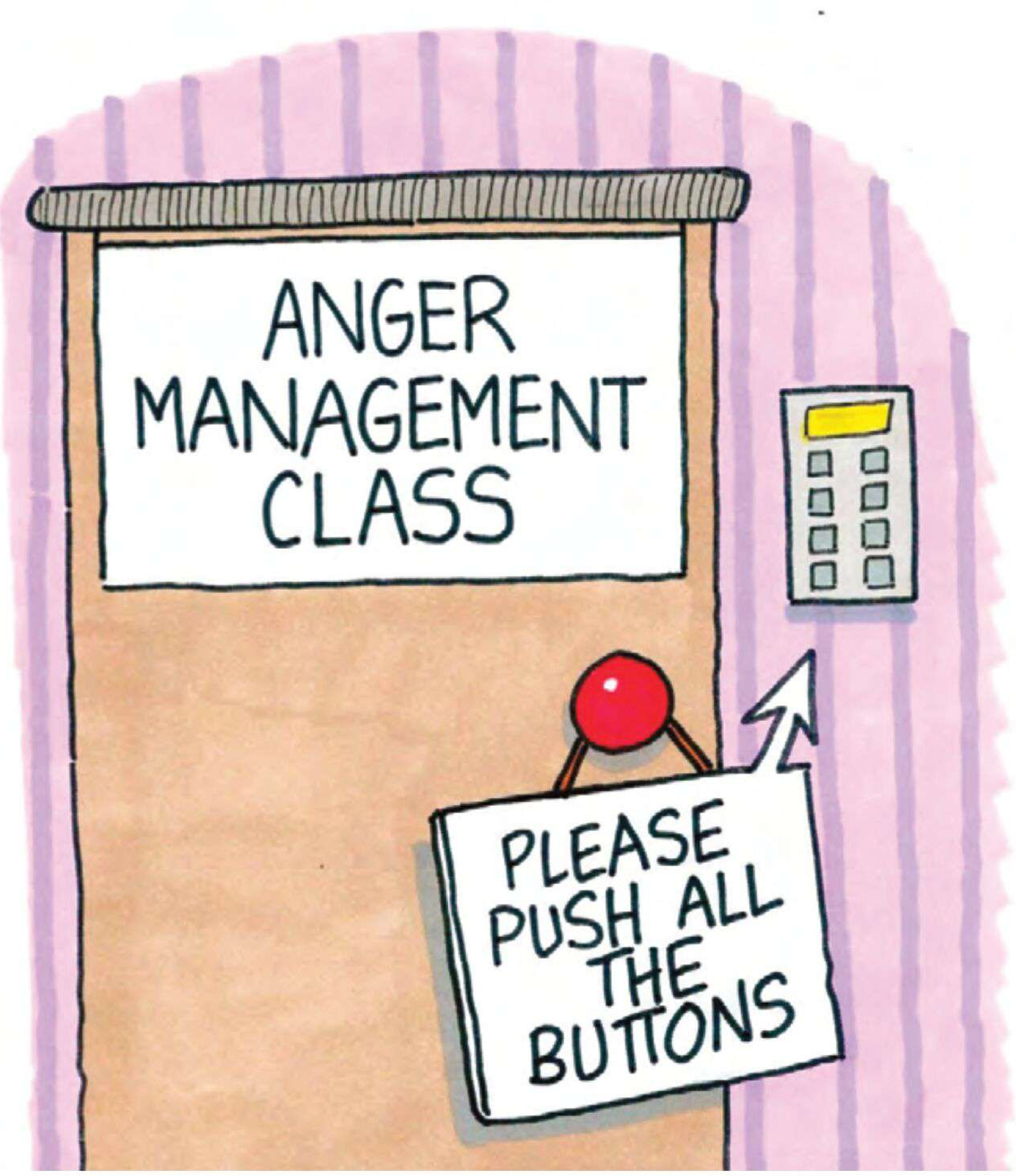
# LIFE
IN THESE
*United States*

**I was eating** breakfast at a diner, sitting near a man who had a cup of coffee but no spoon. Trying to get the waitress's attention, he called out, "Excuse me, this coffee is too hot to stir with my finger."

It worked. A minute later, the waitress returned with another cup of coffee. "Here," she said. "This one isn't so hot."

—YEFIM BRODD
*Kirkland, Washington*


ANGER MANAGEMENT CLASS
PLEASE PUSH ALL THE BUTTONS

TREVOR WHITE/CARTOONSTOCK.COM

**Former football** star and TV personality Michael Strahan is known for his gap-toothed grin. But on the Mean Tweets segment of *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, Strahan read aloud a tweet from someone who is clearly not a fan: "Michael Strahan's teeth are having a middle school dance, where the boys stand on one side of the room and the girls stand on the other."

**Shortly before** my operation, nurses tried to put my nervous son at ease, assuring him, "Your mother has the head surgeon."

That only seemed to alarm my son even more, since he loudly reminded them, "She's having gallbladder surgery!"

—BERYL ECKERT
*Brighton, Colorado*

**How Are We Related?**
✦ I don't know why my in-laws feel qualified to give me parenting advice. After all, I live with

the results of their efforts and it's nothing to brag about.
—@SCARYMOMMY

✦ (At grocery store w/ in-laws) **MIL:** Is this your cart? **Me:** The one with my children in it? **MIL:** Yea. **Me:** .... Yes. That's my cart. Xanax—stat.
—@MARLEBEAN

Just overheard my 54-year-old dad tell my 58-year-old aunt, "Don't tell Mom." So, apparently, that's a lifelong thing.
—@BEKAH_OWSLEY

✦ Ugh. I have to get drunk every time I'm around my in-laws just so they know I'm not pregnant.
—@KENDRAGARDEN

**GOT A FUNNY STORY** *about friends or family? It could be worth $$$. For details, go to* **RD.COM/SUBMIT.**

## LITTLE ME

**You can learn a lot about kids from their parents.**

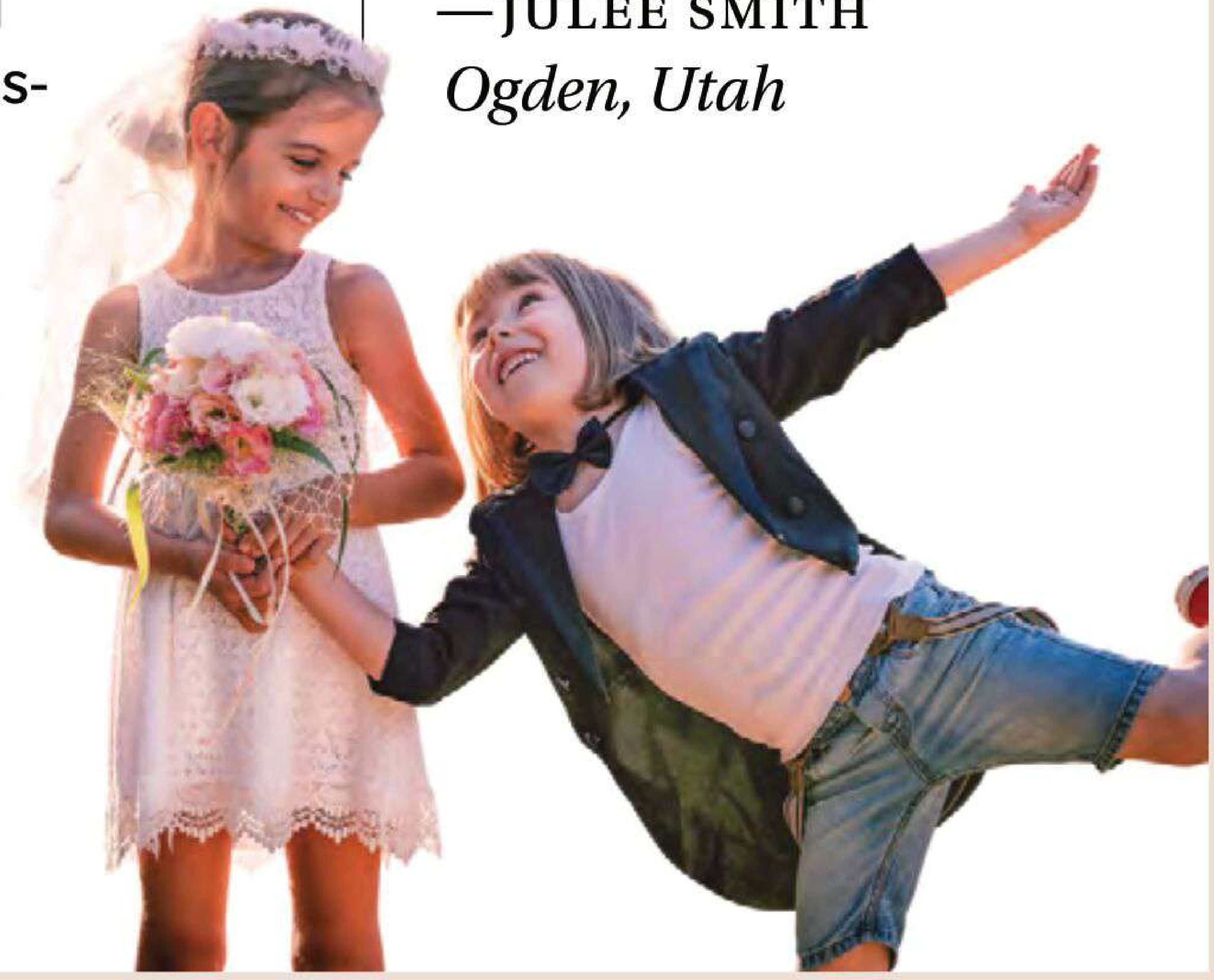
*She's So Over It*
My daughter had a complete existential breakdown one day when she found out that she was going to have to pee every day of her life.
—VIA REDDIT

*He's a Wordsmith*
My two-year-old son calls beards and mustaches "face grass."
—@PAREENE

*She's a Glass-Half-Full Gal*
At a gymnastics "competition," my three-year-old was posing with her trophy. Suddenly, she tripped, and the trophy crashed, breaking in half. Everyone gasped, expecting tears. She picked it up and said, "Look! Now I have two trophies!"
—@MARVINALLEN

*She's Curious*
After a typical rapid-fire question session with our five-year-old, my wife wondered why she asks so many questions. Her response: "Well, I don't know anything."
—VIA REDDIT

*He's a Family Man*
When I asked my five-year-old grandson why he was so anxious to turn six, he replied, "So I can finally get married and have kids!"
—JULEE SMITH
*Ogden, Utah*



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## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.

MYRBETRIQ may cause an allergic reaction with swelling of the face, lips, throat or tongue with or without difficulty breathing. Stop using MYRBETRIQ and go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

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Before taking MYRBETRIQ, tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you have liver or kidney problems.

The most common side effects of MYRBETRIQ include high blood pressure, pain or swelling of the nose or throat (nasopharyngitis), urinary tract infection, and headache.

**For further information, please talk to your healthcare professional and see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information for Myrbetriq® (mirabegron extended-release tablets) on the following pages.**

**You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.**

**Find us on Facebook**
**and visit Myrbetriq.com**

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BE 27·50·92

**Myrbetriq®**
(mirabegron extended-release tablets)
25 mg, 50 mg

# *Important Facts About MYRBETRIQ® (mirabegron extended-release tablets) Rx Only*

## *Active Ingredient*

Myrbetriq (mirabegron extended-release tablets) 25 mg, 50 mg

## *Purpose*

Overactive Bladder (OAB) Symptoms Treatment

## *Uses*

Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick) is a prescription medication used to treat adults with the following symptoms due to a condition called overactive bladder: ■ Urge urinary incontinence: a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents ■ Urgency: a strong need to urinate right away ■ Frequency: urinating often

## *Warnings*

**Do not** take Myrbetriq if you are allergic to mirabegron or any of the ingredients in Myrbetriq. See the end of this summary for a complete list of ingredients in Myrbetriq.

### Serious Side Effects

■ **increased blood pressure–**You and your doctor should check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq. Call your doctor if you have increased blood pressure ■ **inability to empty your bladder (urinary retention)–**Tell your doctor right away if you are unable to empty your bladder ■ **angioedema–**Myrbetriq may cause an allergic reaction with swelling of the lips, face, tongue, or throat with or without difficulty breathing. Stop using Myrbetriq and go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

### Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including:

■ liver problems or kidney problems ■ very high uncontrolled blood pressure ■ trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream ■ if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Myrbetriq will harm your unborn baby. Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. ■ if you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Myrbetriq passes into your breast milk. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby if you take Myrbetriq.

**Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works. Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Tell your doctor if you take: ■ thioridazine (Mellaril™ or Mellaril-S™) ■ flecainide (Tambocor®) ■ propafenone (Rythmol®) ■ digoxin (Lanoxin®) ■ solifenacin succinate (VESIcare®)

## Most Common Side Effects

■ high blood pressure ■ pain or swelling of the nose or throat (nasopharyngitis) ■ urinary tract infection ■ headache

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away, or if you have swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat, hives, skin rash, or itching while taking Myrbetriq.

---

*These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.* ***You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088*** **or www.fda.gov/medwatch**

## Directions

■ Take Myrbetriq exactly as your doctor tells you to take it ■ Take 1 Myrbetriq tablet 1 time a day ■ Take Myrbetriq with water and swallow the tablet whole ■ Do not chew, break, or crush the tablet ■ You can take Myrbetriq with or without food ■ If you miss a dose of Myrbetriq, take it as soon as possible. If it has been more than 12 hours since taking the last dose of Myrbetriq tablets, skip that dose and take the next dose at the usual time ■ If you take too much Myrbetriq, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away

**Keep Myrbetriq and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

## Inactive Ingredients

Butylated hydroxytoluene, hydroxypropyl cellulose, hypromellose, magnesium stearate, polyethylene glycol, polyethylene oxide, red ferric oxide (25 mg Myrbetriq tablet only), and yellow ferric oxide.

**For more information about Myrbetriq, talk to your health care provider.**

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**057-4598-PM 4/21**

**Myrbetriq®**

**(mirabegron extended-release tablets)**

**25 mg, 50 mg**

# YOUR TRUE STORIES
IN *100 Words*

## Old Enough to Know Better

I was standing in the grocery checkout line, wearing the T-shirt my wife had given me for my recent birthday. It read: "I am the square root of 4,900 years old." The lady in line ahead of me turned around and looked at it, then said, "I have no idea what that means." The young man at the next register explained, "Ma'am, that means he is 700 years old!"

—**Fred Sallee**
BELTON, TEXAS

**TO READ MORE** *true stories or submit one, go to* **RD.COM/STORIES.** *If we publish yours in the print magazine, it could be worth $100.*

## Keeping the Change

It was November 21, my parents' wedding anniversary. But we had just buried my father. So I was feeling down as I ran into the bank to cash a check. The teller counted my change. "Wow," he said. "This penny is from 1951." That was the year my parents married. I looked and saw it was a wheat penny. My sweet dad was a coin collector. He had jars full of wheat pennies. Had the teller not commented, I would have spent that penny without a second thought. But now I will forever cherish my penny from heaven.

—MELISSA KRAMER *Herrin, Illinois*

ONE
CENT
UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA
1951

## Mind the Gaps

While we drove through rural South Carolina to visit family for Thanksgiving, our Brooklynite friend was full of questions. He studied the passing landscape with a worried look. "How's the economy down here? I see some areas built up, but there are these long gaps between them." My brother, a southern gentleman, thought for a moment and then answered, "Down here, we call those gaps farms."

—**Rose Gilbert**
MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY

ILLUSTRATION BY *Melanie Lambrick*

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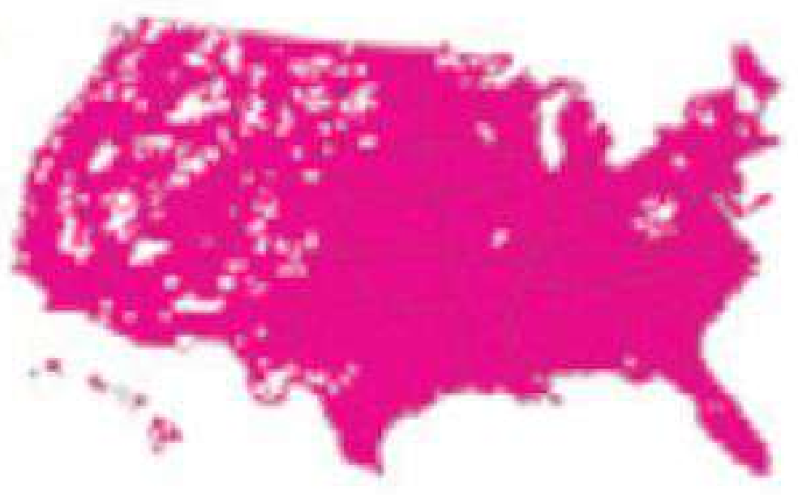

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**HOW TO**

# Work Out Your Worries by Writing

*Spending just a few minutes jotting down your feelings is good for your health, both mental and physical*

BY *Elizabeth Bernstein*

FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

FEAR
TRAUMA
FEAR
GROWTH
HEALING
MEANING
APPRECIATION

After his father was rushed to the hospital with gastrointestinal bleeding, 43-year-old Yanatha Desouvre began to panic. So he did the one thing he knew would calm himself: He wrote.

"I'm so scared," he started. "I don't know what I'll do if I lose my dad."

Over the next few weeks, Desouvre filled several notebooks, writing about his worry as well as his happy memories with his dad—the jokes they'd shared, the basketball games they'd watched, and the time they put up hurricane shutters together, then cooled down with ice cream. Sometimes Desouvre cried as he wrote. Often he laughed.

"Writing allowed me to face my fear," says Desouvre, who teaches entrepreneurship at a college in Miami. "My pen was a portal to process the pain."

He is in good company. An extensive body of research shows benefits to writing about a traumatic experience or difficult situation in a manner that psychologists refer to as "expressive writing." People who do this, recording their deepest thoughts and feelings, often show improved mental and physical health, says James Pennebaker, PhD, a psychology professor at the University of Texas, Austin. Pennebaker pioneered the scientific study of expressive writing as a coping mechanism to deal with trauma in the 1980s.

Expressive writing is a specific technique, and it's different from writing in a journal. The idea is to reflect honestly and thoughtfully on a particular trauma or challenge, and to do it in short sessions.

Pennebaker says that hundreds of studies over several decades have looked at the potential benefits of expressive writing and found that it can strengthen the immune system, including for people with illnesses such as cancer, PTSD, depression, asthma, and arthritis. Research also found that it can help reduce chronic pain and inflammation, and improve mood, sleep, and memory. And it may even help reduce symptoms of depression and PTSD, and prevent colds and flu.

Expressive writing works because it allows you to make meaning out of a painful experience, experts say. Recognizing that something is bothering you is an important first step. Translating that experience into language forces you to organize your thoughts. And creating a narrative gives you a sense of control.

But there are a few caveats. Expressive writing isn't a magical panacea. It shouldn't be used as a replacement for other treatments. And people coping with a severe trauma or depression may not find it useful to do on their own, without therapy.

Yet it can be a powerful coping tool for many, in large part because it helps combat the secrecy people often feel about a trauma, as well as their reluctance to face emotions. "The

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Joleen Zubek*

more you avoid a problem, the more trouble you will have with it, because you create a loop of trepidation and apprehension, and increasing negative emotions," says Brian Marx, PhD, a professor of psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine. He uses an expressive writing protocol he helped to design, called Written Exposure Therapy, with PTSD patients at the VA Boston Healthcare System.

Why write? Thinking or talking about an event can lead to ruminating, where you become lost in your emotions. But writing forces you to slow down, says Joshua Smyth, PhD, distinguished professor of biobehavioral health and medicine at Pennsylvania State University, who studies expressive writing.

The mere act of labeling a feeling—of putting words to an emotion—can dampen the neural activity in the threat area of the brain, says Annette Stanton, PhD, distinguished professor and chair of the department of psychology at UCLA.

Stanton's research suggests that expressive writing can lead to lower depressive symptoms, greater positive mood, and an enhanced appreciation for life. "Writing can increase someone's acceptance of their experience, and acceptance is calming," she says.

What if you don't consider yourself "a writer"? Don't worry about spelling or grammar, and don't share your writing with anyone. But do dig deep into your thoughts and feelings. The goal of the exercise is to find meaning in an unsettling event.

Yanatha Desouvre turned to expressive writing about 15 years ago, after the breakup of what he says was an unhealthy relationship. He wrote to understand why it made him feel vulnerable and sometimes physically ill.

"You can't keep things bottled up," he says. "It will make you sick."

HE STARTS WITH "THE TOUGH STUFF," THEN WRITES ABOUT HOW HE'S GROWN.

The writing brought up an older trauma as well. When he was nine, he says, he survived a shooting in a barbershop in Brooklyn. He had nightmares about it over the years but tried not to focus on it. He started writing about it, then kept going. It helped.

As he wrote, Desouvre asked himself how he felt about the traumas of his life and what they revealed. It was painful, he says. "But when I acknowledged the pain," he says, "I was able to see the courage I didn't know I had."

He thinks of his expressive writing as a captain's log—a recording

## HOW TO PRACTICE EXPRESSIVE WRITING:

**Set aside time, alone.** Turn off your phone. Don't look at e-mail or social media. Expressive writing doesn't work well with a lot of interruptions or distractions.

**Think short-term.** This is not journaling. Your aim is to write for 15 to 20 minutes daily for three days.

**Pick your medium.** Using pen and paper is nice because it slows you down to the pace of your own handwriting. But research shows that using a computer or even recording your voice works too. "The secret sauce is in the translation of thoughts and feelings into language," says Joshua Smyth, PhD, professor of biobehavioral health and medicine at Pennsylvania State University.

**Choose a topic.** What is bothering you most? Is it something you can't talk to anyone else about? Expressive writing is perfect for this.

**Let sleeping dogs lie.** Don't ruminate over something you weren't troubled by to begin with. Expressive writing is meant for the topics you still need to process.

**Make the connections.** Explore your deepest thoughts and feelings. Pick a topic that is worrying you and explore why it happened, how it is related to other things in your life, and why it is bothering you now.

**Give yourself advice.** What recommendations would you give to a friend with a similar issue?

**Don't limit yourself.** If your original topic leads you to another one, that's fine. "This is a meaning-making process," says Smyth. "It might take some writing to get to what is really most essential." And it's OK if you feel bad at first. This is normal if you're focusing on a negative event.

**Don't share.** Our writing changes when we know others are going to read it. Your goal is to be honest with yourself.

**Power through.** If you get stuck, just keep going. Smyth suggests writing the last sentence you wrote over and over until you get unstuck.

**Move on.** If you find it doesn't help after three days, try something else.

of what happened and what he's learned. Sometimes he jots down just a few sentences. But he always starts with "the tough stuff" and then writes about how he's grown from the experience. Last year he wrote in a notebook, recording the stress of wrestling with germs, loss, misinformation, and his kids' homeschooling during the pandemic. But he's also written about what he has gained: more time with his family, and perspective.

"My expressive writing gave me the courage to face my fears," Desouvre says. "And I believe it has helped me discover the hope I need to heal." R

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"I'm doing virtual exercise classes every day!"
SHINGLES DOESN'T CARE

gsk

If you've had chickenpox, you're already carrying the virus that causes shingles inside of you. 1 in 3 people will develop shingles, and the risk only increases as you age.

## Protect yourself with

## SHINGRIX
(ZOSTER VACCINE
RECOMBINANT, ADJUVANTED)

Now you can protect yourself from shingles with a vaccine proven in clinical trials to be over **90% EFFECTIVE.**

**Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about protecting yourself with SHINGRIX**

**What Is SHINGRIX?**

SHINGRIX is an FDA-approved vaccine for the prevention of shingles (herpes zoster) in adults 50 years and older.

SHINGRIX is not used to prevent chickenpox.

**Important Safety Information**

- You should not receive SHINGRIX if you are allergic to any of its ingredients or had an allergic reaction to a previous dose of SHINGRIX
- An increased risk of Guillain-Barré syndrome (severe muscle weakness) was observed after vaccination with SHINGRIX
- The most common side effects are pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site, muscle pain, tiredness, headache, shivering, fever, and upset stomach
- SHINGRIX was not studied in pregnant or nursing women. Tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding
- Vaccination with SHINGRIX may not protect all individuals
- Ask your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of SHINGRIX. Only a healthcare provider can decide if SHINGRIX is right for you

**Please see Important Facts About SHINGRIX on next page.**

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

**SHINGLES DOESN'T CARE. SHINGRIX PROTECTS.**

**If you have questions about SHINGRIX, call 1-800-772-9292.**

**SHINGRIX.com**

## Important Facts About

# SHINGRIX

## (ZOSTER VACCINE RECOMBINANT, ADJUVANTED)

### WHAT IS SHINGRIX (ZOSTER VACCINE RECOMBINANT, ADJUVANTED)?

- SHINGRIX is an FDA-approved vaccine for the prevention of shingles (herpes zoster) in adults 50 years and older
- SHINGRIX is not used to prevent chickenpox

### WHAT IS SHINGLES AND WHAT CAUSES IT?

- Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is a painful skin rash. Generally, people only develop shingles once, but it is possible to get shingles more than once
- Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. 99% of people over the age of 50 carry this virus. After a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus stays inactive in the body. As you age, your immune system starts to naturally decline, increasing your risk of the virus reactivating and causing shingles. 1 out of 3 people will get shingles in their lifetime

### HOW DOES SHINGRIX WORK?

- SHINGRIX is a shingles vaccine that works to boost your body's protection against shingles

### HOW IS SHINGRIX GIVEN?

- SHINGRIX is a 2-dose vaccine series (0.5 mL each, given in the muscle of the upper arm). The second dose should be given between 2 and 6 months after the first dose
- It is important to complete the 2-dose series

### WHO SHOULD NOT GET SHINGRIX?

- You should not receive SHINGRIX if you are allergic to any of its ingredients or had an allergic reaction to a previous dose of SHINGRIX

### WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS?

- An increased risk of Guillain-Barré syndrome (severe muscle weakness) was observed after vaccination with SHINGRIX
- The most common side effects are pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site, muscle pain, tiredness, headache, shivering, fever, and upset stomach

### ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- SHINGRIX was not studied in pregnant or nursing women. Tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding
- Vaccination with SHINGRIX may not protect all individuals
- Ask your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of SHINGRIX. Only a healthcare provider can decide if SHINGRIX is right for you

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- This is only a summary of important information
- To learn more about SHINGRIX, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider
- Visit SHINGRIX.com or call 1-800-772-9292 for more information

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SGXJRNA210001 April 2021
Produced in USA.

# LAUGH LINES

## Amuse Bouche

If I ever rob a bank, I won't resort to guns or violence. I'll bring in sizzling fajitas, the one distraction no human being can resist.

—@samgrittner

**My dad and** I went to a restaurant and the waiter pointed at the QR code on the wall and said, "That's our menu." And my dad looked at it really close and said, "Is this some kind of joke?"

—@johnistoasted

**I have an** idea for a hot wings restaurant: The wings are free, but napkins cost $100.

—@lunch_enjoyer

**Restaurants drastically overestimate** how much I care about which wood they smoke my bacon over.

—@SLOnans

**When I tell** people I "tried a new restaurant," I mean I went to a place which is different from where I normally get fettuccini alfredo—and I tried their fettuccini alfredo.

—@notviking

**Waiter: Would you** like to know the one thing on the menu we're out of tonight?
Me: No, no, I'll find it, thanks.

—@whatsJo

WRAGG/GETTY IMAGES

Atlas and Poot Poot were both born preemies, and their bond grew as they did.

**BEST PET PALS**
*Contest*

# Kid Being Kids

## Poot Poot

**PARIS, TEXAS**

THIS IS POOT POOT, the white Nigerian Dwarf goat that surprised us all. Poot Poot was born last March as a triplet and was the tiniest kid we'd ever seen at 1.4 pounds.

The size of a newborn rabbit at birth, he had a body temperature so low that it wouldn't even register on the thermometer. We didn't think he would make it to the morning.

My ten-year-old daughter, Atlas, and I stayed up with him all night. Poot Poot was too little to nurse, so we milked his mother and used an eyedropper to hand-feed the milk to her baby. When Poot Poot got too groggy to eat, we put honey on his gums to give his low blood sugar a quick boost, an old trick we'd learned from other goat farmers.

I slept on the couch with him on top of me. To raise his body temperature, we zipped him up in a resealable plastic bag with his head poking

COURTESY MARY MUSICK

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out so we could submerge him in the kitchen sink filled with warm water without his getting wet. We found that it was much more effective than a heating pad to get his body temperature up.

On day two, Poot Poot turned a corner. We finally got him to nurse from a regular baby bottle.

On our farm we have 15 goats plus chickens and dogs. Poot Poot wasn't the first goat we'd had to bring inside our home, but he was the sweetest. And the neatest. Poot Poot rarely made messes—fortunately, because there wasn't a diaper small enough for him.

He stayed in the house with us for about a month. He was just too little to keep outside; another animal could have pushed him around or scooped him up. Each day, Atlas and Poot Poot became closer. His siblings and the rest of the goat herd didn't take to him too well, so he became Atlas's pet. She, too, had been a preemie, weighing only 2 pounds and 12 ounces when she was born, so she has always thought it was sweet that he was small, like her.

**WHATEVER WE DO, HE DOES: WATCHING TV, PLAYING, OR NAPPING.**

Poot Poot's little tail wriggles at the sound of her voice, and he likes to sit on her back while she lies on the floor to read during homeschooling. Whatever we do, he does: watching TV, playing, or napping. He loves to play with Atlas and the dogs, even standing on top of our gentle Great Dane when he curls up on the floor.

Now, weighing in at ten pounds, Poot Poot has his own area outside. He has a new companion, a two-month-old kid named Dotsy, who is already the same size as him. Whenever Atlas steps foot

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outside the door, Poot Poot screams and screams until she comes over to get him. Atlas picks strawberries and broccoli from the garden for Poot Poot and her to munch on. The only thing he loves more is crunchy cheese balls.

The pair play hide-and-seek in the tall grass, Atlas waiting until Poot Poot turns around, then dashing off to hide, Poot Poot bleating and hopping as he follows the sound of her voice. This little kid has already brought so much joy into our lives and has become a special part of our family. R

—*Nominated by* MARY AND ATLAS MUSICK

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*Have a Pet Pals tale? Enter your story and visuals and see terms at* RD.COM/PETPALS. *Nominees may appear in print and online.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

EVEN HEROES NEED HEROES

Over 3 million veterans suffer from PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). Service dogs are proven to help — even when traditional therapies cannot. But due to training costs and lack of awareness, less than 1% of those in need of a service dog are able to get one.

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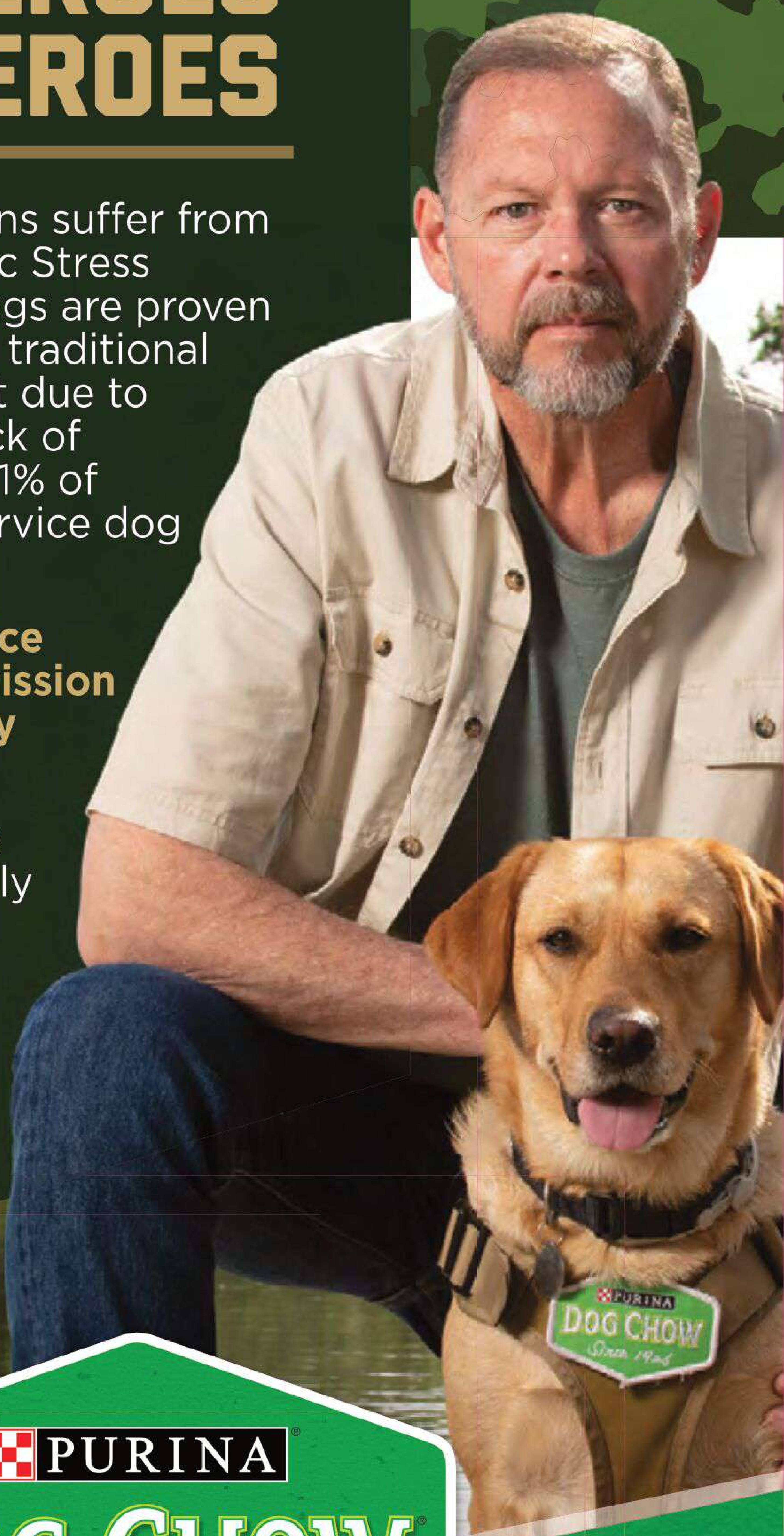

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THE
**FOOD ON YOUR PLATE**

*I Am Olive Oil ...*

# Beware of Imposters and Spoilers

BY *Kate Lowenstein*
AND *Daniel Gritzer*

In early 2017, a special unit of the Italian police arrested 33 members of the 'Ndrangheta, the organized crime group based in the Calabria region. The offense for which the men were apprehended did not involve selling drugs, committing murder, or laundering money (though the group is known for those things too). It was about me, olive oil.

This notorious Italian mafia had been taking low-quality olive mash, called pomace, and selling it in Boston, New York, Chicago, and New Jersey as the good stuff—extra virgin—making millions of dollars in the process.

This wasn't the first time I was at the center of some high drama; in fact, that's been part of my deal for millennia. Take the Hanukkah story—the one in which the Jews had only one night's worth of lamp oil but, miraculously, it lasted eight. That was me, back when I was more important as a source of light than as a food.

I've also been used as perfume, skin lotion, hair ointment, and even a cleaning agent. The ancient Romans had no soap, so instead they'd slather me all over their bodies and then scrape the oil off with a dull blade called a strigil. I was used similarly in ancient Greece, where the sweaty, dirty scrapings from the bodies of elite athletes would be collected and sold as a medicine believed to reduce inflammation and other maladies. I give myself a lot of credit on the health front, but I don't

PLAINVIEW/GETTY IMAGES

think I really did much good like that.

Much more recently, I've been categorized into quality grades based on processing methods and levels of free oleic acid (the lower the level, the more pristine the oil). Extra-virgin olive oil, or EVOO, has the lowest oleic acid and the best flavor; it's good raw in dressings, or as a cooking oil. Virgin oil has higher oleic acid but can work as a frying oil, while refined oil (also called "pure" or "olive pomace") is so heavily processed it's better for lubricating machinery than for use in food.

Instances of fraud aside, high-quality EVOO can be difficult to find, as there's little guarantee that I will still be in good form when you open the bottle. Time and heat can degrade my taste and health benefits and bring me closer to full-on rancidity. Best-by dates often give more than two years for the oil in the bottle, but that assumes good storage conditions, which are far from guaranteed in many places. How do you avoid such pitfalls? There's no easy answer, but look for bottles that have a best-by date that's as far out as possible, which suggests it's fresher.

Avoid super cheap EVOO—a good everyday olive oil costs about $15 per liter. Go lower than that and chances of getting the good stuff diminish. Because light speeds oxidation, steer clear of clear bottles; any company serious about my quality will sell me in dark glass or tin. Look for companies with a shorter supply chain by buying from a specialty shop that has a direct relationship with the farmers, or from bigger (often more affordable) producers that have a transparent process.

MARK DERSE/TMB STUDIOS; PROP STYLIST: MELISSA FRANCO; FOOD STYLIST: JOSH RINK

## OLIVE OIL DIP

In a small bowl, stir together ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil with 2 finely minced cloves garlic, ½ teaspoon finely minced fresh rosemary needles, ½ teaspoon finely minced fresh oregano leaves, ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, and ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper. Let infuse for at least 15 minutes and up to 1 hour before serving with fresh crusty bread. Garlic-herb oil can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

It's also smart to skip those giant jugs of me unless you're sure you'll use me up within a couple of months, as I go rancid rapidly once my container is opened. Good versions of me can taste herbal, grassy, almondy, artichoke-y, green tomato-ish, and peppery. Some varieties of me are artichoke-y, green tomato-ish, and peppery. Some varieties of me are floral, some mild, and others spicy.

Among my main sources of bitterness are the antioxidants known as polyphenols. An oil isn't inherently higher quality if it's more bitter, though that might be indicative of more health benefits. In general, I'm one of the healthiest oils you can eat, courtesy of my low ratio of saturated fats and high proportion of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, which tend to be more plentiful than in other vegetable oils.

My uses in the kitchen are vast, but I'm most handy for oiling a pan before sautéing and for making simple sauces, vinaigrettes, and marinades. I have a distinctive flavor, so using me in a dish is a question of whether you want my flavor in your food. If the answer is no—say, if you're making a birthday cake or Chinese stir-fried vegetables—a more neutral oil might be a better fit.

If you've read much about oils for cooking, their smoke point—the temperature at which the oil begins to visibly emit bluish smoke, a sign of the oil degrading as harmful free radicals form—has likely come up. EVOO has a relatively low smoke point as cooking oils go—somewhere in the 320-370° range, which are typical frying temps.

It'd be easy to conclude that EVOO should therefore be avoided for frying, but this isn't necessarily the case. Thanks to my high antioxidants, I am also a very stable oil, so while my smoke point is low, I resist free-radical formation quite well, making me, counterintuitively, a pretty decent oil for frying. But of course, that assumes you're getting the real me and not some cheap knockoff. R

*Kate Lowenstein is a health journalist and the editor-in-chief at Vice; Daniel Gritzer is the culinary director of the cooking site Serious Eats.*

◆ ◆ ◆

## Fair Weather Friend

**One night when Al Roker was still a young meteorologist in Cleveland, the evening news anchor, Doug Adair, was swatted on the head by a homeless African American man outside the studio. During the broadcast the next day, Adair turned to Roker and said, "Al, I don't know if you heard, but last night after the 11 o'clock news one of your people attacked me." Before anyone could draw a shocked breath, Roker calmly turned to him and asked, "Doug, why would a weatherman attack you?" And that, my friends, is how you become one of the most beloved fixtures on network news.**

JUDITH NEWMAN IN THE NEW YORK TIMES

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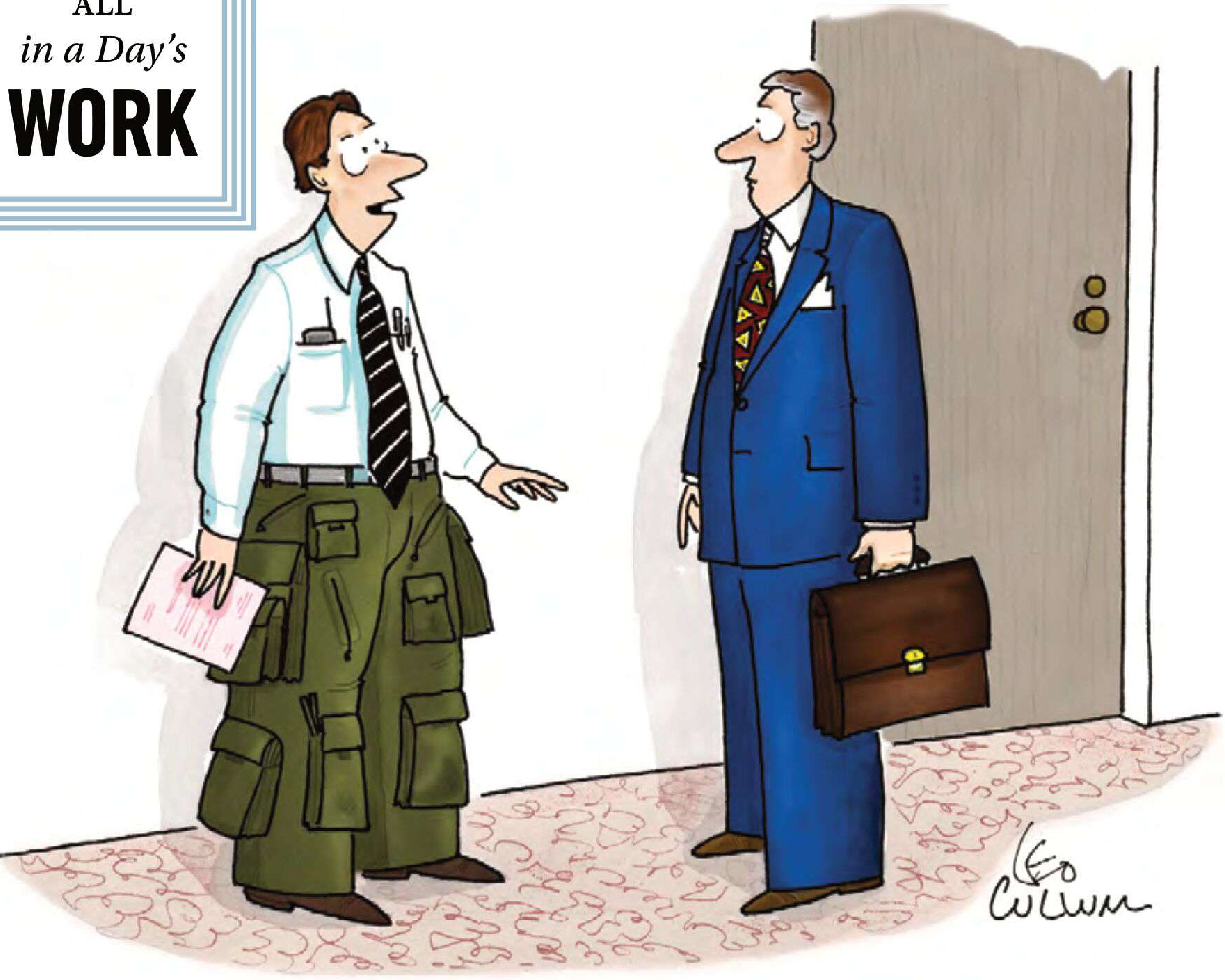
# ALL *in a Day's* WORK



"You don't get an office. You get cargo pants."

**My 14-year-old's** first job was as a dishwasher at a restaurant. After his first shift, he came home upset, saying his coworkers had laughed at him.

"Why would they do that?" I asked.

"Because our boss posted my application on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Where it asked how I learned about the job, I wrote, 'My mother taught me.'"

—VERONICA BARNARD
*Townsend, Massachusetts*

**More First-Job Woes**

✦ Had a job walking five Chihuahuas. When they got tired, I had to carry them home. Two in my arms, two on my shoulders, and one on my head.

—@WHOOPIEPIE10

✦ I earned $30 working construction for a temp agency. When I finished, there was a $35 parking ticket on my car.

—@DONNYJ44

LEO CULLUM/CARTOONSTOCK.COM

A guy in my office is shaking his protein shake, and this woman poked her head around the corner and said, "Do I hear margaritasssss?"... No Janet, it's 10 a.m.

—@TJKILBRIDE

✦ A woman yelled at me for watching her swim. I was a lifeguard.

—@REAGANPITROWSKI

**The driver** I stopped for speeding insisted he had a valid excuse.

"Sorry, officer," he said. "I just had the car washed and was drying it out."

—CHARLES DUNNING
*Haines City, Florida*

**Me (texting boss):** We still on for work today?
**Boss:** Yes. You don't have to text me this every morning. We're "on" for work every day, Mon.-Fri.

—@DLICJ

**YOUR FUNNY STORY** *about the workplace could be worth $$$. For details, go to page 2 or* **RD.COM/SUBMIT**.

## WOULD YOU HIRE THEM?

**A job interview is your chance to make a good first impression on hiring managers. Don't screw it up the way these people did.**

✦ My colleague and I interviewed a very nervous guy. When he got up to leave, he opened the wrong door and walked into the closet. We waited for him to emerge, and when he didn't, my coworker went to investigate. The poor man was so mortified, he was trying to climb out a window rather than go back in.

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN

✦ The candidate stated that his career goal was not to work.

SOURCE: INC.COM

✦ Pointing to the employment application question "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" a job-seeker asked, "You only want the felonies?" This was for a banking position.

SOURCE: MONSTER.COM

✦ I went to greet an interviewee in the lobby. I should point out that I am five foot one and she is much taller. Anyway, the moment she saw me, she stood up, stuck out her hand, and said, "Well, hi there, Shorty!"

SOURCE: INC.COM

STURTI/GETTY IMAGES

### 13 THINGS

# The Dark Web Demystified

BY *Michelle Crouch*

1 THE DARK web is a collection of Internet sites that you can't find with a regular search engine and that people can visit anonymously. As opposed to the "surface web" (the searchable part of the Internet that anyone can access), the dark web is a subset of the "deep web," which houses password-protected medical and financial records, pages behind paywalls, and cloud-based e-mail accounts such as Gmail.

2 BECAUSE IT'S anonymous and encrypted, the dark web is (perhaps unsurprisingly) a hotbed of criminal activity. On dark web marketplaces, there are listings to buy drugs, firearms, porn, exotic animals, credit card numbers, and more—complete with photos, gushing descriptions, and user reviews. There are also hate sites, conspiracy theory forums, and how-to tutorials for every illegal activity imaginable.

ILLUSTRATION BY *Serge Bloch*

3 ALTHOUGH SIMPLY accessing the dark web is perfectly legal, it can be risky because the dark web doesn't have as many built-in protections as the surface web does. Surfing the dark web can expose you to malicious software, hackers, bots, and scams.

4 SINCE YOU can't find the dark web using a regular browser such as Chrome or Safari, users have to download a special router to get there. The most popular is called Tor, short for The Onion Router. It's based on technology developed by the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory to protect the communications of U.S. agents operating under hostile regimes.

5 PURCHASES ON the dark web are made with cryptocurrency, which allows people to transfer money instantly and anonymously anywhere in the world without an intermediary. Bitcoin was the original currency of choice, but it has been losing favor because law enforcement has been able to trace some Bitcoin transactions. Dark web market administrators are now experimenting with other currencies, including Monero and Litecoin.

6 THE NUMBER of dark web forum users surged during the COVID-19 lockdown. Criminals have taken advantage of our increased time online, security gaps created by remote workforces, and people's anxiety during the crisis.

7 EVEN IF you've never been on the dark web, there's a chance your credit card or bank information has. Both the number and volume of data breaches have escalated in recent years, and at least 115 million stolen debit and credit cards were posted to dark web marketplaces in 2020, according to cybersecurity firm Gemini Advisory. Criminals use stolen data to make online purchases, or they imprint it onto a card they can walk into a business and use.

8 AN EASY way to keep your credit cards off the dark web: Make sure a website address starts with "https" (the "s" stands for "secure") before you enter your payment information. You could also use a mobile payment app (think PayPal or Apple Pay) that uses a technology that hides your credit card number when you pay.

9 SOME COMPANIES will do a "dark web sweep" to check whether your information has been compromised. But there's no reason to pay for this service. To see if your e-mail or phone number has been included in a dark web data dump, go to haveibeenpwnd.com.

If you learn you've been part of a breach, change passwords and monitor financial accounts—or consider a credit freeze.

10 THERE'S A reason why experts say you shouldn't use the same log-in credentials for different websites. Cybercriminals on the dark web buy huge databases of username and password combinations that come from data breaches. Then they use bots to plug the credentials into bank portals and other lucrative sites until they crack into an account.

11 FRAUDSTERS ALSO use dark web username/password lists for a common blackmail scam: They e-mail you saying they have your password and share it as proof. Then they claim to have hacked into your computer and recorded you visiting an adult website or something else embarrassing, and threaten to distribute the video to your contacts unless you pay a ransom. If this scam happens to you, don't pay a dime. Report it to the FBI at ic3.gov.

12 INCREASINGLY, LAW enforcement is using the dark web to pinpoint and break up illegal activity. In one of the biggest busts so far, 338 people were arrested worldwide in 2019 as part of a takedown of a dark web child pornography site.

13 BUT THE dark web isn't all bad. It can be a lifeline for people living in totalitarian countries who want access to unfiltered or factual information. People under oppressive regimes can use it to safely express views that oppose their government and to access organizations for support and resources. It's also a place where anonymous sources and whistleblowers can share secrets or tips with journalists and law enforcement without compromising their identities. Many legitimate organizations, including the *New York Times* and Facebook, have versions of their sites on the dark web. R

**Protect Yourself**
Learn more ways to safeguard your identity and maintain anonymity online in "Delete Your Internet Footprint" on page 80.

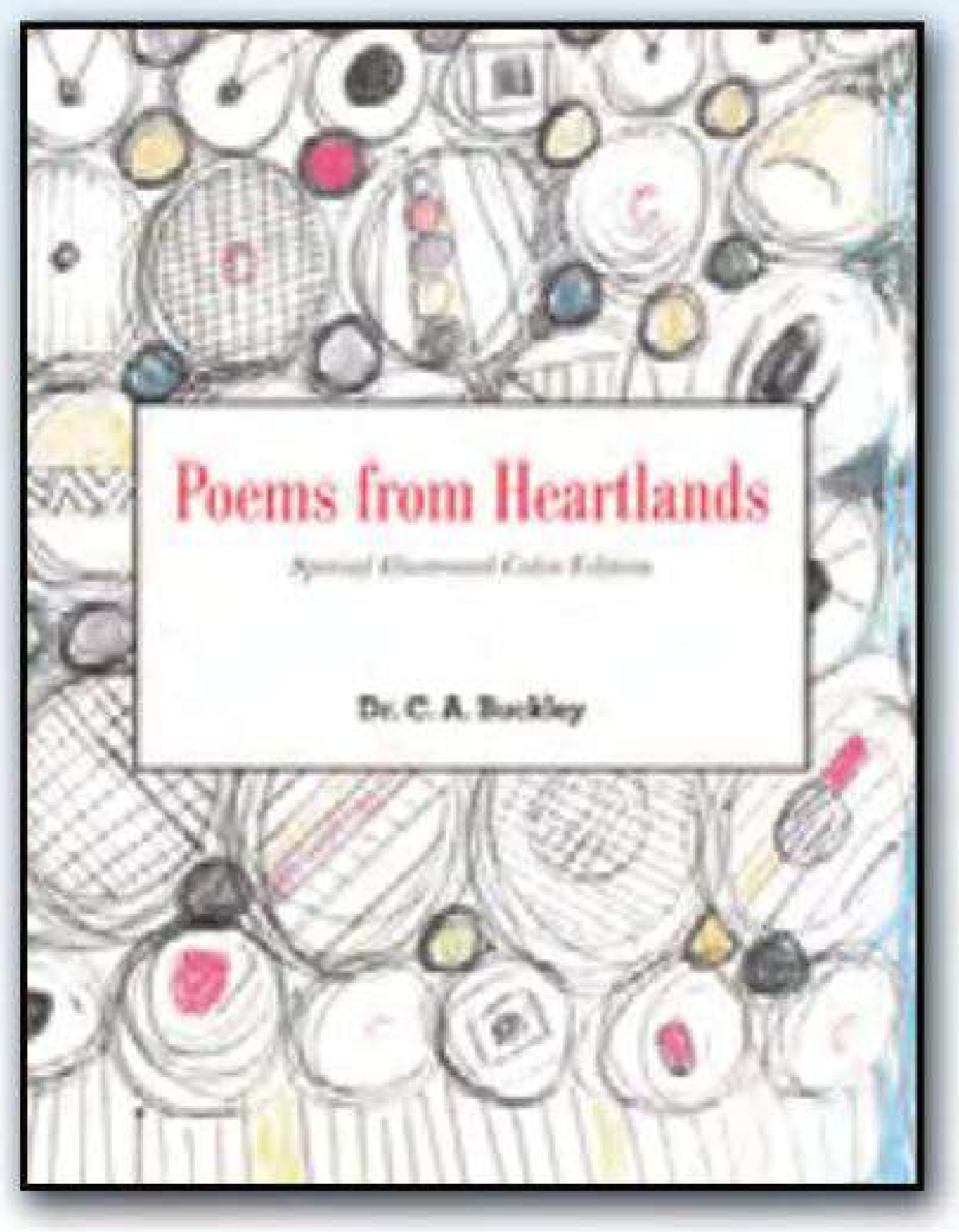
◆ ◆ ◆

### Goodnight Twitter, Goodnight Facebook

My friend's toddler babbled "Don't forget to subscribe" as he was put to bed. The kid watches so much YouTube, he thought it meant "goodbye."

@TOMGARA

# WELCOME TO YOUR NEXT READ.


Poems from Heartlands
Dr. C. A. Buckley

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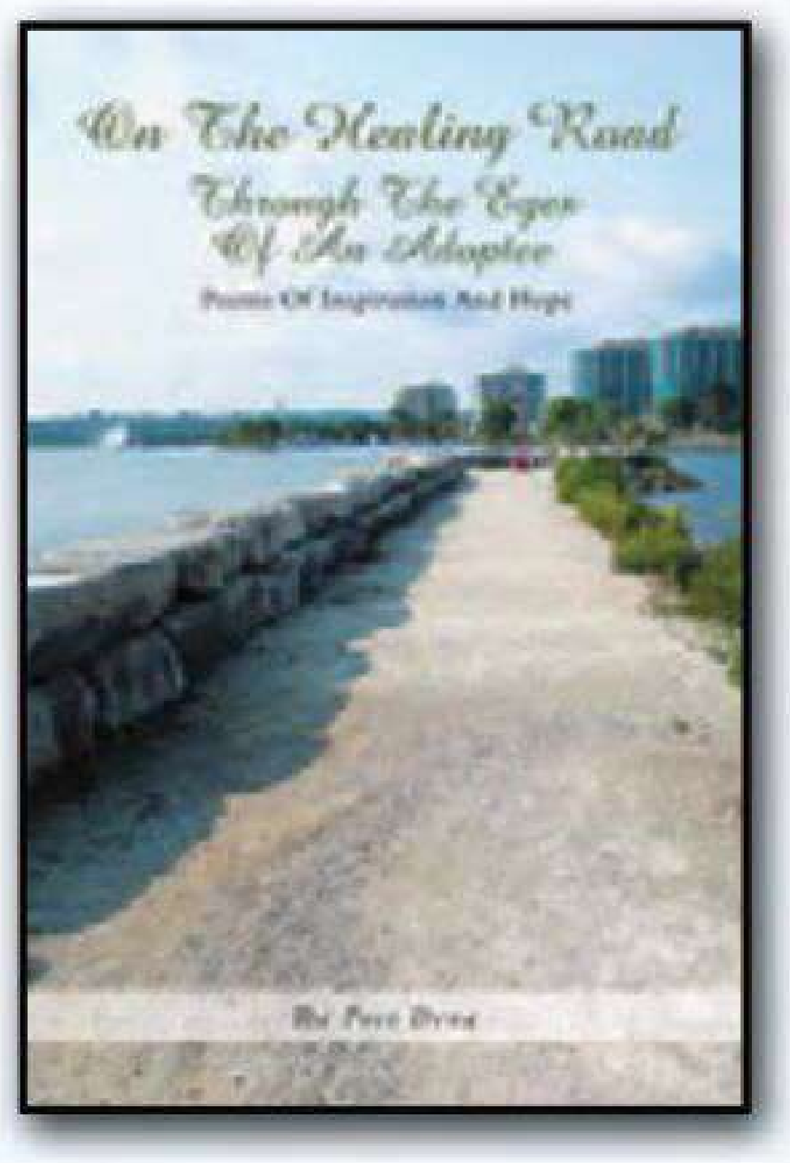
On The Healing Road
Through The Eyes
Of An Adoptee

## On The Healing Road

*Through The Eyes Of An Adoptee*

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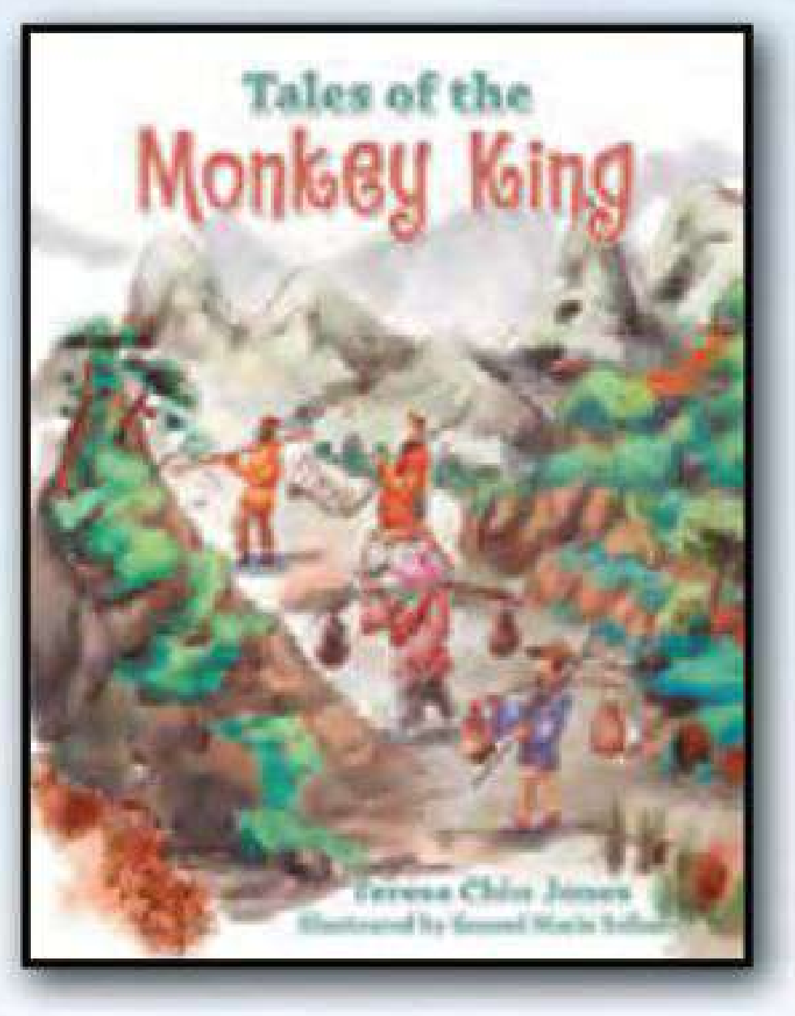
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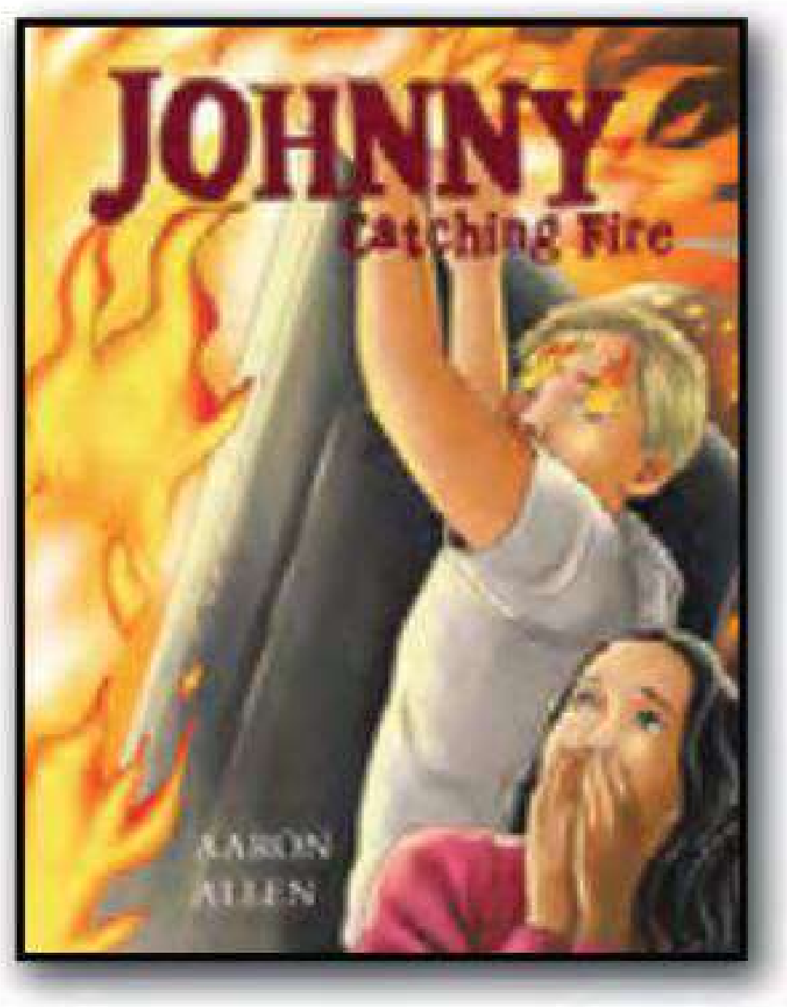
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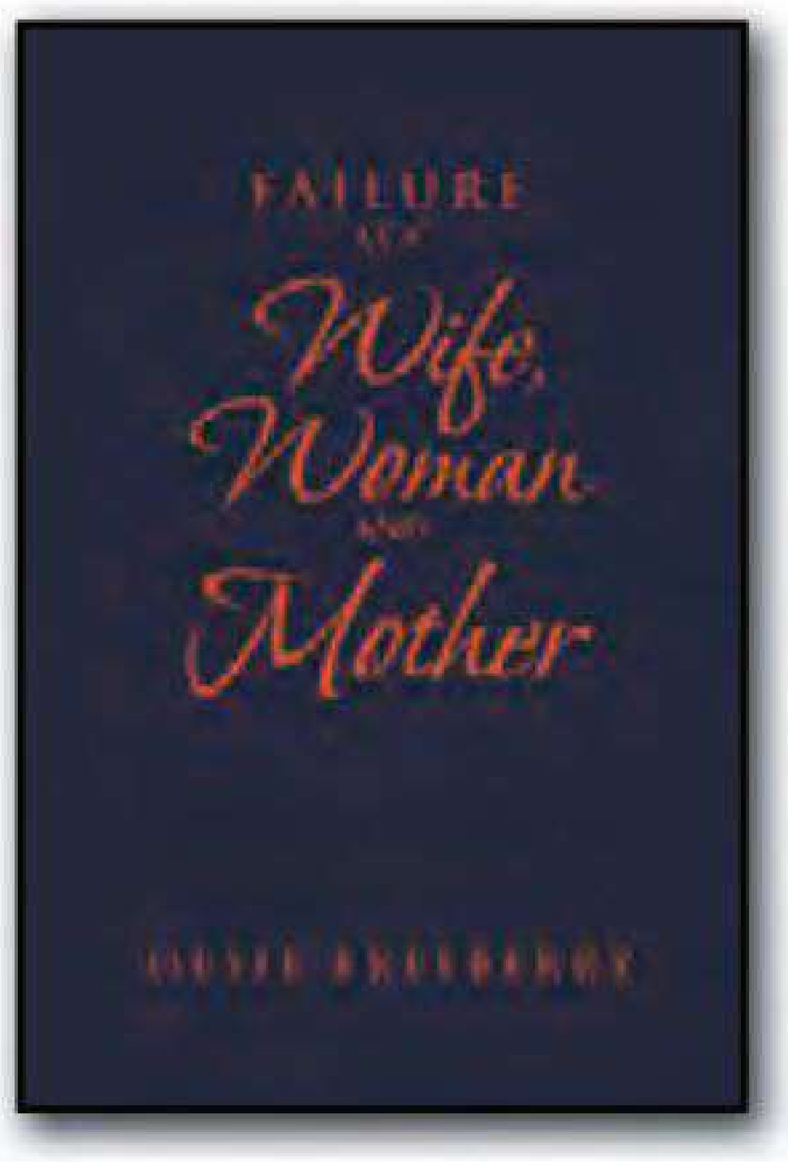
FAILURE
Wife,
Woman
Mother

## Failure as a Wife, Woman and Mother

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*Failure as a Wife, Woman and Mother* follows the story of how one woman who divorces one husband and buries two, found her faith, her path and friendships.

# WHERE, OH WHERE?

*An* RD PHOTO QUIZ

JS8419
8419

ROCK
LAND
17051
BOONE & SCENIC VALLEY RAILROAD

ALL ABOARD! Many states offer scenic fall foliage train tours, but this particular line has treated passengers to stunning autumnal views from atop the Bass Point Creek High Bridge, a 156-foot-high steel structure built in 1913. The company that operates this rail line bought its steam locomotive—one of the world's last commercially produced—from China in 1989 for $350,000, hence the Chinese flag alongside our own on the locomotive. But where was this scene photographed? *(Answer on* PAGE 119.*)*

**A** Norwich, Connecticut

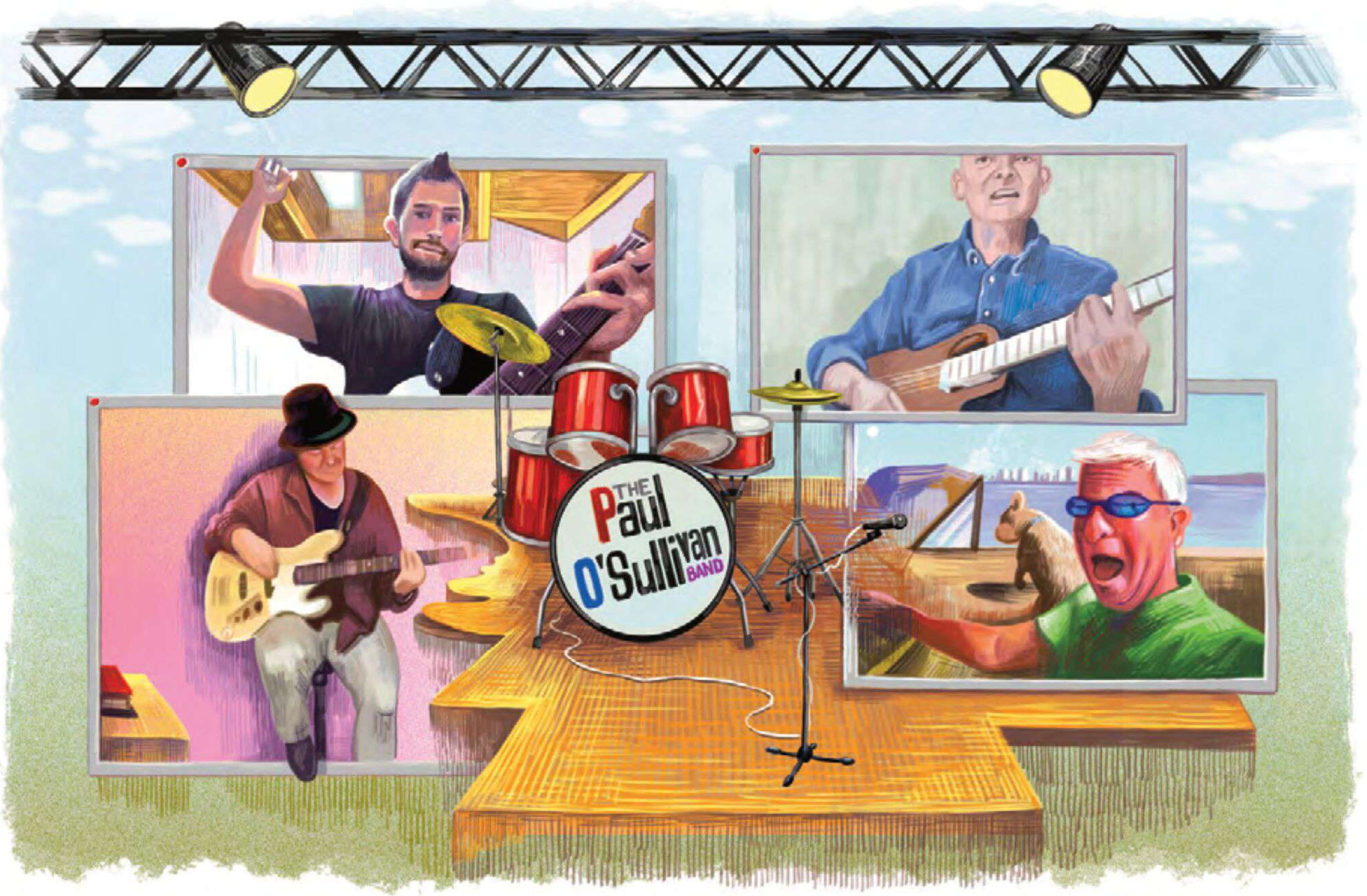
**B** Treasure Valley, Idaho

**C** Boone County, Iowa

**D** Elkins, West Virginia

JUSTIN ROGERS/COUNTRY

## EVERYDAY MIRACLES



# Banding Together

BY *Emma Taubenfeld*

PAUL O'SULLIVAN LOUNGED around his Baltimore apartment one evening in 2014, feeling bored. So, like a lot of people with nothing better to do, he logged on to Facebook to find out just how many others on the social network shared his name. Moments later, Paul O'Sullivans were popping out of the woodwork as dozens of name twins from around the world filled his screen. On a whim, the then-27-year-old human resources employee decided to send friend requests to them all.

Many of his fellow Paul O'Sullivans ignored him, but a few felt too curious

ILLUSTRATION BY *Gel Jamlang*

to pass up his invitation. "My first reaction was 'Who is this guy and what does he want from me?'" says Paul O'Sullivan from the Netherlands—now known as Rotterdam Paul.

As Baltimore Paul scrolled through the other Paul O'Sullivans' profiles, he noticed something four of them had in common: They were all musicians. Like Baltimore Paul, Rotterdam Paul sings and plays guitar. Another Paul in Manchester, England, plays bass. And Paul from Pennsylvania is a drummer. Four men with the same name who all love making music? Baltimore Paul had an idea. Wouldn't it be funny, he asked the other musical Pauls, if they formed a band called The Paul O'Sullivans? Yes, it would be, they all agreed. And so they did.

Starting a band across multiple time zones proved to be tricky. Shaky Wi-Fi and other technical difficulties meant they were often out of sync. And being even half a second off from one another wrecked their sound. To fix this, they created a sort of musical assembly line. Baltimore Paul and Rotterdam Paul write and record a basic track, then e-mail it to Manchester Paul.

"I listen to the song over a few days," says Manchester Paul, "to get a feel for what bass arrangement seems most appropriate." Once he records a bass track, he e-mails it back to Baltimore Paul, who then builds it into the main song. Later, Pennsylvania Paul adds the drumbeat. Round and round the track goes, with each member adding on his own layer until they achieve the sound they want.

The Paul O'Sullivan Band released its first original song, "Namesake," in March 2016. It's an upbeat track about long-distance relationships—not romantic ones, but friendships like those they had begun to develop.

But just months after the song's release, Baltimore Paul began experiencing health issues that forced him to take time off from making music. The other Pauls decided to take a break too—from the band, that is.

"WRITING A SONG WITH SOMEONE ACROSS THE OCEAN MAKES YOU FEEL LESS TRAPPED."

But they didn't press pause on their friendship. Instead of supporting one another on bass and drums, they supported one another more generally. The other Pauls made sure Baltimore Paul never felt alone, even with the miles (and ocean) between them. They shared family pictures, chatted live on Instagram, and checked in on Baltimore Paul and on one another.

"The other Pauls are gentle, dear, caring people," says Pennsylvania Paul. "They are a fountain of joy."

It was about four years before Baltimore Paul was well enough to start making music again. The first thing the band did was create a music video for "Namesake," which debuted on YouTube in February 2020. In its first two weeks online, the video pulled in more than 20,000 views.

And when COVID-19 slowly shut down the world just weeks later, the Pauls didn't miss a beat. After all, the band had already gotten the hang of remote work. But now their international connection took on new meaning. "Writing a song with someone across the ocean makes you feel less trapped," says Baltimore Paul. They used their time during the pandemic to record their first EP, or short album. Titled *Internet Famous: A Retrospective*, it was released last April.

Half of the proceeds from the EP will be donated to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, which supports the World Health Organization's work.

"Life is tough sometimes," says Pennsylvania Paul. "When you have an opportunity to generate joy, you have to put aside the other stuff."

A new source of joy for the Pauls is getting to spend time with each other in person. Last fall, Baltimore Paul surprised Pennsylvania Paul at his home after coordinating with his fiancée. It was the first time any of them had met face-to-face without a computer screen in the way. The two spent more time together this past summer and hope to add the other two Pauls to the mix soon. And when schedules allow, they plan to embark on a whirlwind four-stop world tour—one concert in each of their hometowns.

"What are the odds," says Baltimore Paul, that a random Facebook request would lead not only to new music but to lasting friendships as well? "Some things are just meant to be." R

◆ ◆ ◆

## Tricks of the Trade

**Who says that corporate executives are boring? These companies clearly had some fun selecting their stock exchange symbols:**

**BID: Sotheby's, the auction company**

**CAKE: The Cheesecake Factory**

**FIZZ: National Beverage Company**

**HOG: Harley-Davidson Motorcycles**

**PZZA: Papa John's**

**ZEUS: Olympic Steel, Inc.**

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# WE FOUND A FIX

5 TRICKS TO *Improve Your Life**

## 1

### “Request” Facebook Take You to Your Leaders

**TECH** Facebook has made it just as easy to find your government officials as your old school chums and favorite cousins. Stay informed about the civic goings-on in your area by going to facebook.com/townhall. Enter your home address and you’ll see federal, state, and local officials, including some council members and municipal office holders. What’s more, you’ll be able to contact each of them with the click of a button, and see a feed devoted to posts from civic leaders in your district. Don’t forget to turn on reminders about upcoming elections too!

**From* RD.COM

JOLEEN ZUBEK

## 2

### Get Free Shipping Every Time

**MONEY** If you're shopping online and just a few dollars away from free shipping, it's tempting to buy one more item—probably something you don't really need—to save those shipping fees. Instead, add a gift card to your cart. Choose a dollar amount that puts you over the free shipping threshold and use the card later for something you actually want.

## 3

### Don't Hammer Your Nails

**HOME** Next time you go to pick up a hammer, spare your fingernails when you're aiming for the metal ones. Hold the nail in place by tucking it between the arms of a bobby pin. The nail stem will fit snugly into the indents of the bobby pin's bumps for a tight hold, and an errant swing won't crush your fingertips.

## 4

### Cook Brown Rice Twice as Fast

**FOOD** If you think brown rice takes too long to cook, here's a way to speed things up: Soak the rice in a covered pot at a 2-to-1 water-to-rice ratio and leave it in the fridge overnight. The rice, having absorbed most of the water by the next day, will take half the amount of time to cook.

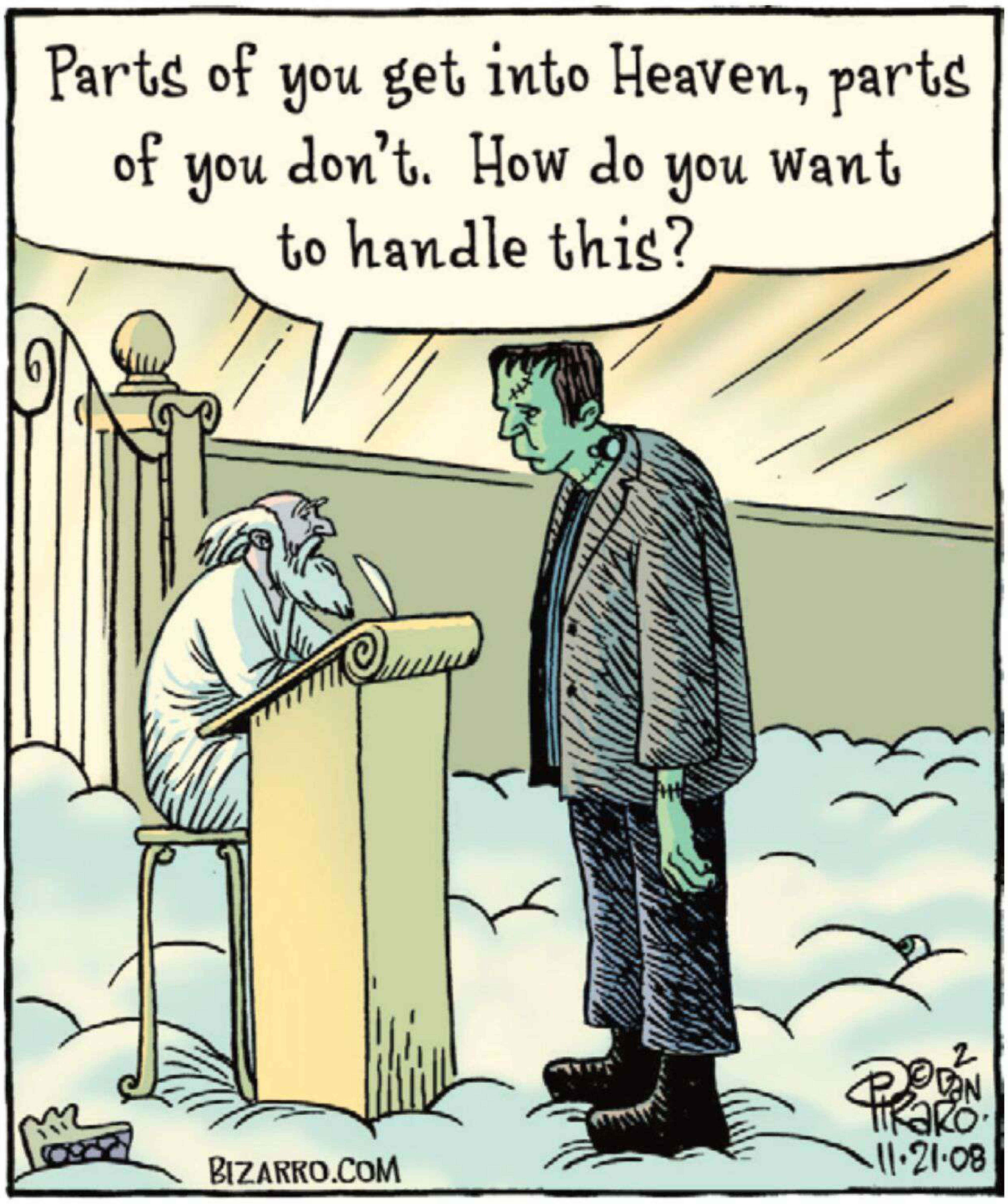
## 5

### Assist Your Not-So-Green Thumb

**GARDENING** If you have a houseplant that's prone to drying out quickly (or if you're prone to occasionally missing a watering), place a kitchen sponge at the bottom of the pot under the soil the next time you repot the plant. The sponge will act as a reservoir, absorbing and holding any excess water to feed back to your plant the next time the roots are a bit parched. R

REDLINE96/GETTY IMAGES (PLANT), MEMBIO/GETTY IMAGES (SPONGES)

# LAUGHTER
THE BEST *Medicine*


Parts of you get into Heaven, parts of you don't. How do you want to handle this?
BIZARRO.COM
DAN PIRARO 11·21·08

**A man** had too much to drink and needed a ride home. So he called his wife to come pick him up.

"Where are you?" she asked.

"Let's see," he said, looking around. "I'm at the corner of Walk and Don't Walk."

*—Submitted by*
MELANIE L. JUNGLES
*Evergreen, Colorado*

**Upon entering** a store, a man noticed a big "BEWARE OF DOG" sign posted on the door. He continued cautiously until he noticed an old hound asleep on the floor near the cash register.

"Is that the dog we're supposed to beware of?" he asked a worker behind the counter.

"Yep, that's him," the man replied.

"He doesn't look dangerous. Why do you need that sign?"

"Because," the man explained, "before I put it up, people kept tripping over him."

—STARTSAT60.COM

**A mother** returned from the supermarket and handed her young son the box of animal crackers he had begged her for. As she unpacked the rest of the groceries, the boy spread the crackers all over the kitchen table.

"What are you doing?" the mom asked.

"I'm looking for the seal," said the boy. "It says you can't eat these if it's broken."

—SCOUTLIFE.ORG

DAN PIRARO

My body is a wonderland. But the weird one Alice fell into.

—@STIRTHEMOOSE

**I used to be** addicted to the hokey pokey. But I turned myself around.

—FATHERLY.COM

**What's Up, Doc?**

✦ The doctor gave me some cream for my skin rash. He said I was a sight for psoriasis.

—BESTLIFEONLINE.NET

✦ I went to see the doctor about my short-term memory problems. The first thing he did was make me pay in advance.

—MEMESBAMS.COM

**Tonight's forecast:** dark; continued dark tonight, turning to partly light in the morning.

—GEORGE CARLIN, *comedian*

**GOT A FUNNY JOKE?** *It could be worth $$$. For details, go to* **RD.COM/SUBMIT.**

**A priest** was looking for something when his friend walked in.

"I'm meeting some members of the laity," the priest said, "and I can't find my collar."

"My, my," his friend replied. "A lay date and a collar short."

*—Submitted by* WENDELL POWERS *Woodbury, Minnesota*

## A REAL PLOT TWIST

The author of *The Prince* thought it better to be feared than loved and instructed youngsters to be cunning and cutthroat. Here's how Mr. Machiavelli would review these more recent children's titles:

✦ ***Where the Wild Things Are:*** Max could have been a great and terrible ruler. But he allowed loneliness to creep into his heart and gave up his position of power. I give this opus 3 out of 5 stars.

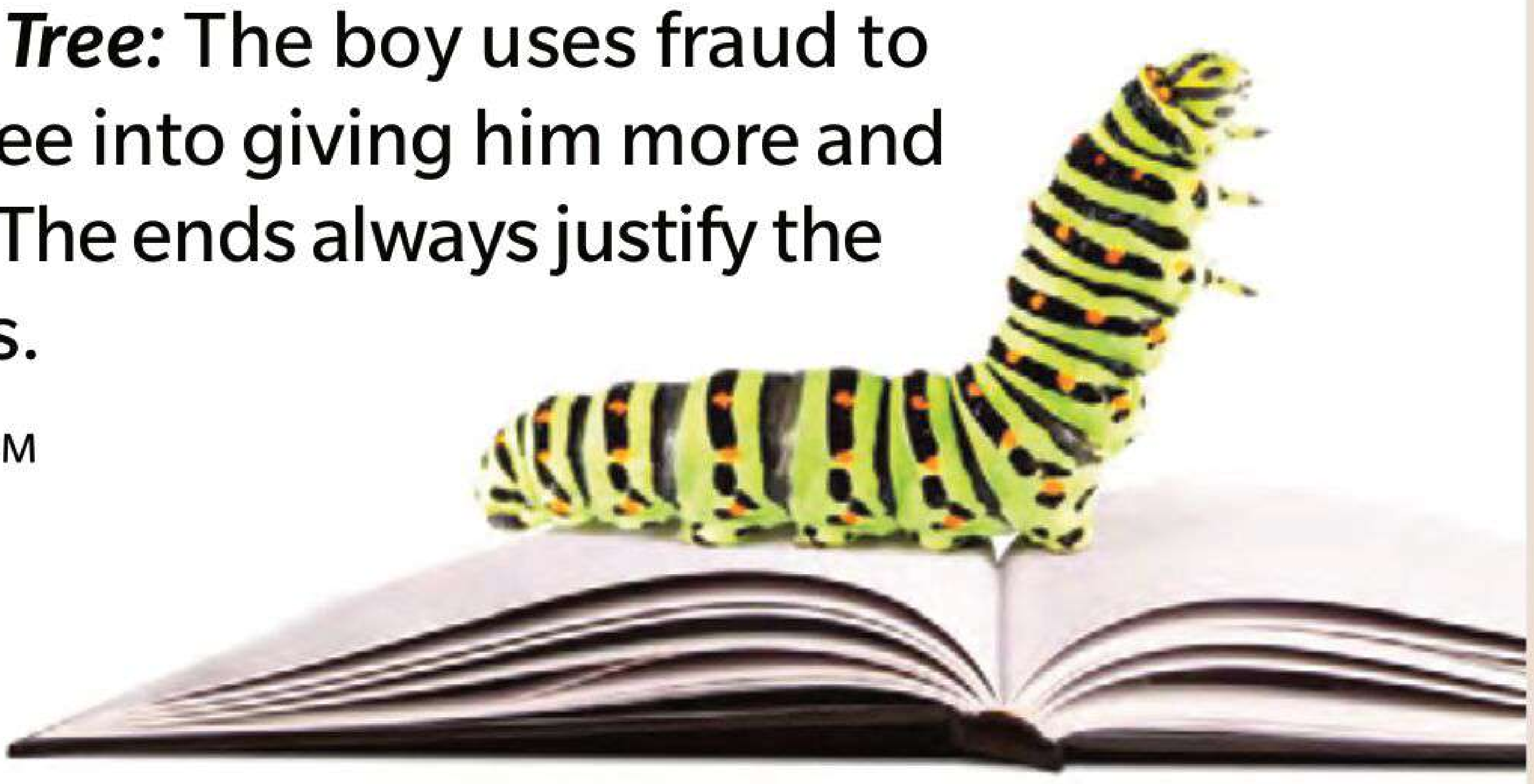
✦ ***Guess How Much I Love You?:*** Love should be used only for deceitful means, and Little Nutbrown Hare understands that his father's love can be used to manipulate his actions. 4 stars.

✦ ***Charlotte's Web:*** Charlotte should have drained that pig for all he was worth. Instead, she made the mistake of choosing to have empathy for the weak hog. Pathetic. I award this book 1 weak dying star.

✦ ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar:*** The ambitious young caterpillar eats his way through bigger and more difficult obstacles and emerges more powerful than ever. 5 glorious stars.

✦ ***The Giving Tree:*** The boy uses fraud to deceive the tree into giving him more and more of itself. The ends always justify the means. 5 stars.

—POINTSINCASE.COM



ARLINDO71/GETTY IMAGES (CATERPILLAR), EKINYALGIN/GETTY IMAGES (BOOK)

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## THE Healthy

*Wellness from* THEHEALTHY.COM

# More Than Winter-Dry Skin

*Eczema and psoriasis flare up this time of year. Here's what you need to know.*

BY *Lisa Marie Conklin with reporting by Lambeth Hochwald and Jen Babakhan*

FOR SOME PEOPLE, freezing temperatures and harsh winds can cause more than chapped lips and dry skin. People with eczema or psoriasis—two inflammatory skin conditions—are most likely to experience flare-ups when the weather turns cold and dry. Though these skin conditions are often mistaken for each other (both can include itching, rashes, and redness), there are differences in how they affect the body and how they are treated.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *James Steinberg*

There are several types of eczema, but the most common is atopic dermatitis (AD), an allergic skin disease. The main symptom is itching, which can be so intense that scratching leaves the skin vulnerable to infection. "Eczema is an inherited skin condition often associated with asthma or allergic rhinitis [hay fever]," says Jeffrey Weinberg, MD, associate clinical professor of dermatology with the Mount Sinai hospitals in New York City.

Eczema often starts in early childhood, and some people outgrow the symptoms as they age. In children the disease usually appears on the cheeks, elbows, knees, and scalp. In adults, eczema typically shows up in the creases of the face and neck, behind the knees, and on the wrists and ankles.

Besides itching, eczema symptoms can include dry, red, scaly, or inflamed skin; bleeding (from scratching); swelling; crusted or oozing skin; and rough, leathery, scaly patches. These symptoms can come and go, with periods of clear skin followed by flare-ups when the skin becomes itchy and irritated again.

Anything that might rob the skin of moisture can precipitate a flare-up, including the cold, dry air of winter; central heating; and frequent bathing without applying a moisturizer afterward. Skin that's exposed to winter elements is particularly vulnerable, especially on the hands and face. And as people bundle up, wool and polyester clothing can also be irritants.

There is no cure for eczema, but flare-ups can be minimized and symptoms managed. The most important step is moisturizing frequently. Symptoms are usually treated with topical medications (including corticosteroids), biologic agents (drugs created

I TRIED IT...

## Green Tea Instead of Coffee for a Week

**When my doctor** told me my blood pressure was slightly elevated, I decided to swap out coffee for green tea (which has only about one-third the caffeine of my favorite dark roast) for a week to see how I'd feel. By 3 p.m. on the first day, I was feeling groggy and had a bad headache—a sign of caffeine withdrawal. I suffered through another mild headache around noon on day two, but I had a glorious night's sleep with no tossing or turning, no middle-of-the-night awakenings. By day three, I felt less bloated and sluggish after lunch and had a surge of productivity and alertness. By the end of the week, my complexion was glowing (thanks, antioxidants!), and I was less jittery and irritable. Green tea, you just may have won this one. —Hana Hong

JURGA PO ALESSI/GETTY IMAGES

in a lab to mimic naturally occurring proteins and molecules), immunosuppressant drugs, and phototherapy.

Usually, the body grows new skin cells and sheds them every 30 days. But for people with psoriasis, the immune system goes into overdrive and produces new skin cells every three to four days. Instead of shedding the overproduced cells, the dead skin piles up as raised reddish patches with a thick, scaly, silvery-white layer. These patches, called plaques, can appear anywhere on the body but most often occur on the elbows, behind the knees, and on the scalp, lower back, and buttocks.

This condition affects an estimated eight million Americans, according to the National Psoriasis Foundation. Psoriasis can occur at any age, but it most commonly begins between the ages of 15 and 25.

As with eczema, both environmental factors and genetic predisposition play a role. While it may be difficult for most people to tell the two conditions apart, it's actually fairly easy for dermatologists: Psoriasis usually makes the skin thicker and patchier than eczema, and it doesn't itch as intensely.

Winter is usually a bad time for people with psoriasis, in part because of the cold, dry weather, but also because of the relative lack of ultraviolet light, which can ease the condition in the warmer months. What's more, just about anything that jolts the immune system can bring about a painful flare-up, including stress, colds, strep throat, or even an ear infection.

One in three people with psoriasis develop psoriatic arthritis, a disease that causes stiffness, swelling, and pain in the joints and surrounding areas. The chronic inflammation in psoriasis is also associated with other serious conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

There are many treatment options for psoriasis sufferers. Mild to moderate cases can be treated topically with a combination of steroids and emollients such as petroleum jelly mixed with salicylic acid, retinoids, and vitamin D. Phototherapy treatment can help by exposing the skin to an artificial source of UVB, a type of ultraviolet light. Moderate to severe psoriasis usually requires systemic treatment with oral medication (such as methotrexate and systemic retinoids) or biologics.

“PSORIASIS IS NOT FATAL, BUT DEALING WITH IT IS MURDER.”

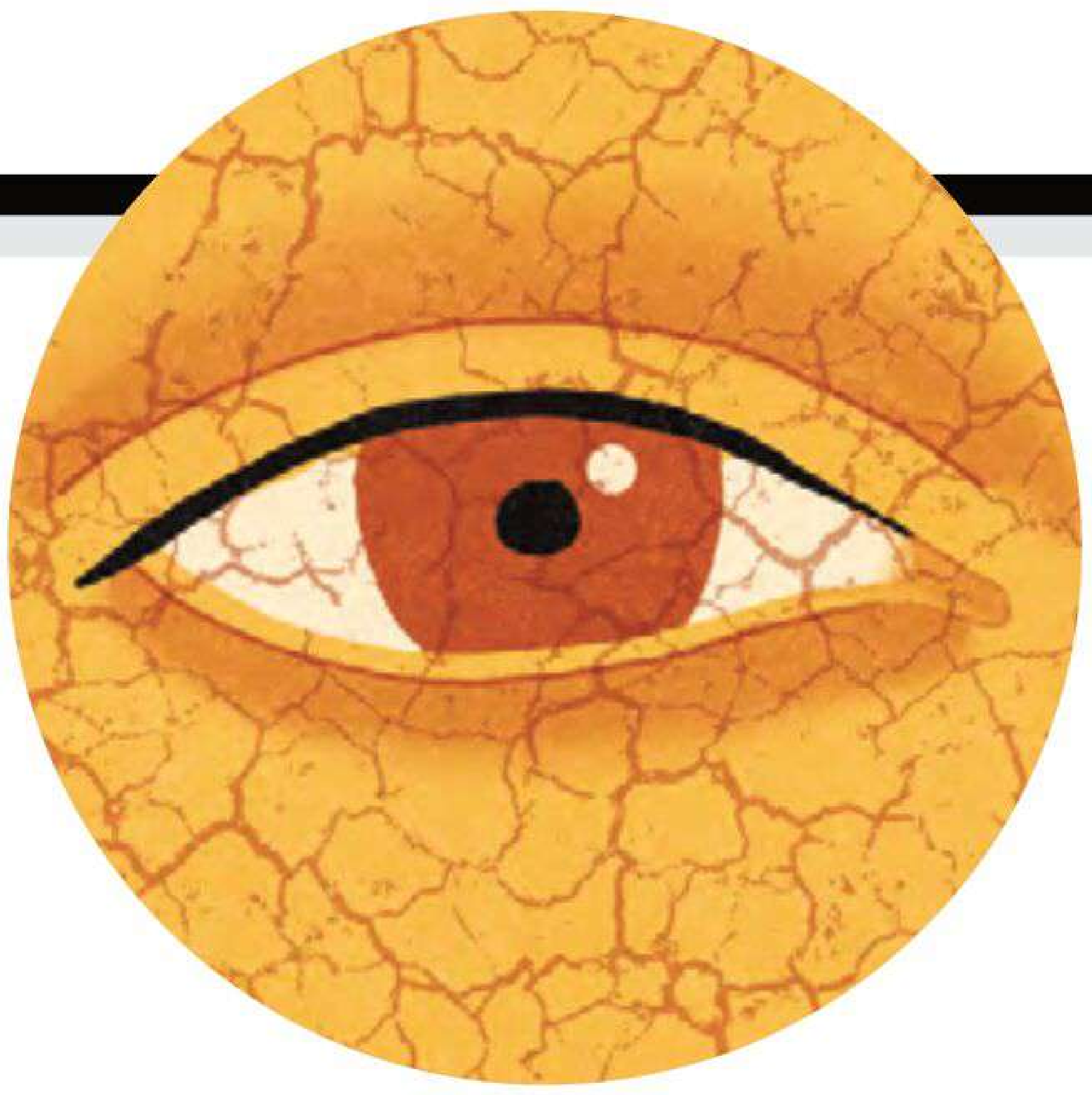
It was treatment with biologics that finally helped Jennifer Kerner, 37, a scientist and consultant with Booz Allen Hamilton in Washington, DC, control her psoriasis. Diagnosed in high school after many years of developing red, itchy skin patches, she tried every topical medication available, without success. Kerner had heard about biologic medications, but they were described as a last resort by her doctor.

She became more desperate as her condition worsened. “The patches became more visible; they were on my arms and legs,” she says. “To cover them up I would wear long sleeves, turtlenecks, and pants—all the things you shouldn't do with psoriasis because it overheats the skin and makes it worse.”

Finally Kerner consulted another doctor, who listened to her story and immediately said, “We're going to put you on a biologic.”

Kerner was so relieved she burst into tears. “I began giving myself biologic injections every two weeks, and I felt like a new person,” she says.

As with eczema, psoriasis can make people feel shunned because of their skin's appearance, even though the condition is not contagious. “There's a huge social impact for psoriasis patients,” says Mark Lebwohl, MD, a dermatologist with Mount Sinai in New York. “I've heard of hairdressers turning patients away, as well as blood banks not allowing people to donate. Sometimes it even results in job losses and absenteeism. Someone once said, ‘Psoriasis is not fatal, but dealing with it is murder,’ and that's a great description of it. It's a truly devastating disease.”



# Coping with Dry Eye

BY *Beth Weinhouse*

DRY EYE—A CONDITION that occurs when your eyes don't produce enough tears, the tears don't work correctly, or they evaporate too quickly—is much more than a nuisance. "The burning can feel like sand is in your eyes, and this can cause eye fatigue, light sensitivity, and blurry vision," says Angela Bevels, an optometrist in Tucson, Arizona.

Nearly 16 million Americans may have dry eye, according to the National Eye Institute. Anyone can develop the problem, but it's more common in women and in people older than age 50.

Sometimes dry eye is a temporary condition caused by a variety of irritants. But it can be chronic, too, when caused by immune system diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. Skin issues on or around the eyelids and diseases of the glands in the eyelids are also common contributors. People who wear contact lenses or have had eye surgeries such as LASIK are also at a higher risk.

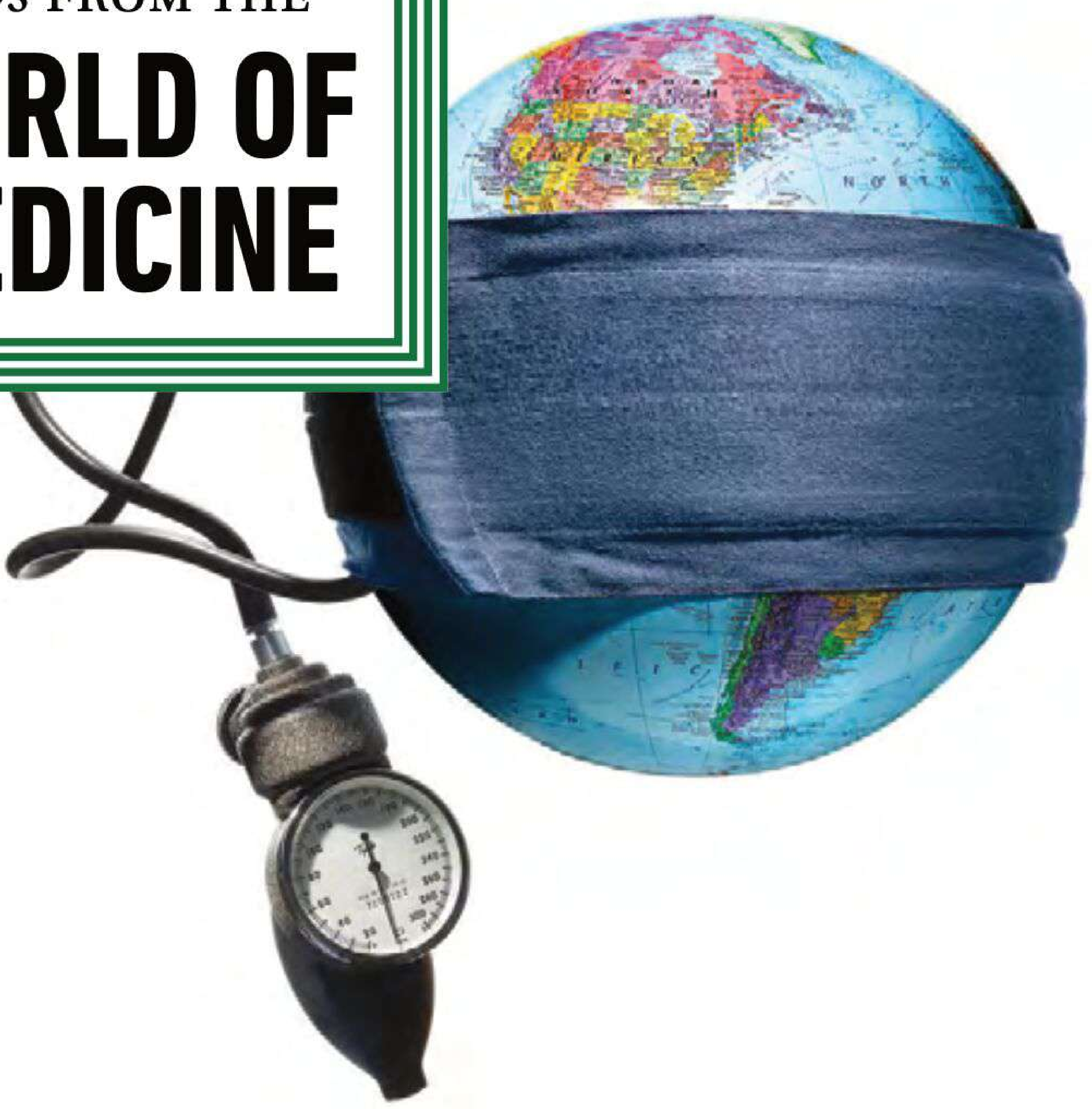
Some lifestyle changes can minimize the discomfort. First, take frequent breaks from staring at computer and phone screens, which cause tears to work overtime, according to Aditya Kanesa-thasan, MD, an ophthalmologist at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia.

Turn off fans or other direct air to your face, as this can increase the evaporative loss of tears as well, he says. The American Optometric Association (AOA) suggests using a humidifier to keep the air moist, and making sure to get a good night's sleep. Hydration can also play a role in keeping your eyes lubricated. The AOA guidelines suggest aiming for eight to ten glasses of water every day.

Over-the-counter lubricant eye drops can help ease symptoms. But when these remedies don't provide relief or you find you're using drops more than six times a day, it's time to see an eye doctor for treatments that are available only by prescription or when administered in a medical office. "These include heat and compression treatments of the eyelids to improve the tear film [the fluid layer that covers the eye], prescription anti-inflammatory eye drops, and temporary plugs that can be placed in the eyelids to keep the tears around longer," Dr. Kanesa-thasan says. R

*News* FROM THE

# WORLD OF MEDICINE



## STROKE RECOVERY: NERVE STIMULATION CAN HELP

Stroke survivors have a 50 to 60 percent chance of losing arm function. In addition to physical therapy, some patients with this symptom are benefiting from a treatment called vagus nerve stimulation. The procedure requires implanting a small box-type device under the skin on the chest. When activated using a wireless transmitter, the device stimulates the left vagus nerve, which runs from the abdomen to the brain stem. Scientists think this type of artificial stimulation helps to strengthen certain neural circuits, making it easier for the brain to relearn lost movements.

## Is Work Shortening Your Life?

When the COVID-19 pandemic sent U.S. office workers home to get their jobs done, many say they previously didn't have that option. Now, 71 percent of employees who say they can do their jobs from home are actually teleworking—but there is a downside. Working from home can lead to overworking, as it blurs the line between professional life and home life. The World Health Organization cautions that regularly working more than 55 hours per week is associated with a 35 percent higher risk of stroke and a 17 percent higher risk of dying from heart disease. This is compared to maintaining boundaries around work and clocking 35 to 40 weekly hours. So establish start and stop times for work-from-home days, and share them with colleagues to help keep your hours in check.

THE VOORHES

## Keep Smartphones Away from Cardiac Implants

Some smartphones, including the iPhone 12, contain strong magnets. Unfortunately, these magnets can temporarily suspend the normal operations of many pacemakers and cardiac defibrillators. While these lifesaving implants continue working normally once they're back outside of the magnetic field, in the meantime they won't necessarily send the electrical pulses or shocks needed if a heart starts to beat too quickly, slowly, or irregularly. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration advises people to keep electronics with strong magnets at least 6 inches away from medical implants and suggests carrying them in a hip pocket instead of a breast pocket.

SURIYO HMUN KAEW/GETTYIMAGES (PHONE). LESTER120/GETTYIMAGES (FOOD)

## A NEW WAY TO SLOW PROSTATE CANCER

Healthy eating habits may slow the progression of prostate cancer, preliminary evidence suggests. This news is especially good for patients who choose to monitor their disease rather than opt for immediate tumor-removal surgery, an invasive procedure that can cause sexual dysfunction and loss of bladder control. In a Texan study of patients with tumors that weren't yet large or aggressive enough to make surgery a strict necessity, those whose meals resembled the Mediterranean diet (high in fruit, vegetables, legumes, grains, and fish, and low in red and processed meat) had a lower risk of cancer progression.

## Eating Out Frequently Is a Health Hazard

In a new study led by the University of Iowa, people who ate restaurant food twice a day had a 49 percent higher risk of mortality at any point in time, compared to people who dined out less than once a week. Previous studies might help to explain why: One of them, a 2015 analysis published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition,* reports that even though some establishments provide healthy food, restaurant fare is usually less balanced than home-cooked meals. It tends to contain more calories, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium—even when it's not fast food. And while it's hard to know exactly what cooks are putting into your food at a restaurant, at home you're aware of your meals' ingredients and their proportions. R

# QUOTABLE QUOTES

**When you focus on the past, that's your ego. When I focus on the future, it's my pride. I try to focus in the present. That's humility.**

**—Giannis Antetokounmpo,** ATHLETE

I like to refer to my social circle as "boutique." My friends are all unique and high-quality and serve good food. But more than that, they teach me things about the world and myself that I couldn't learn anywhere else.

**—Dan Levy,** ACTOR

**Love and a cough cannot be concealed.**
**Even a small cough. Even a small love.**

**—Anne Sexton,** POET

Compassion is the breakdown of all barriers between us. A heart-to-heart bonding. Your pain is my pain. It's mingled and shared between us.

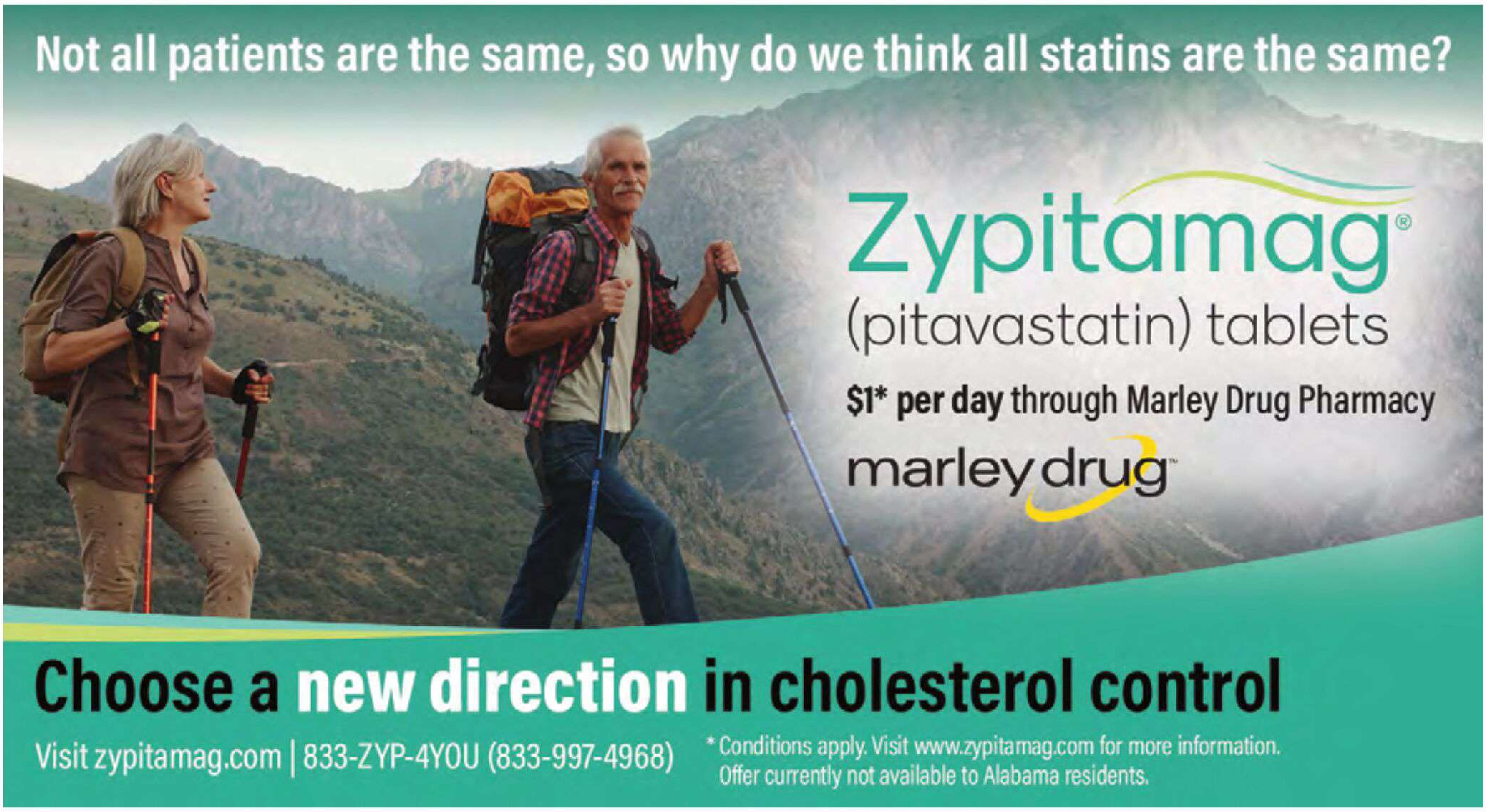
**—Bob Wells,** WRITER

**There are no "guilty pleasures" when it comes to reading.**

**—Will Self,** WRITER

ANTETOKOUNMPO
SEXTON
LEVY

FROM LEFT: STEVEN RYAN/GETTY IMAGES. BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES. GP IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES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Offer currently not available to Alabama residents.

## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION for ZYPITAMAG (pitavastatin) tablets

### Who should NOT take ZYPITAMAG?

ZYPITAMAG is not right for everyone. Do not take ZYPITAMAG if:

- You have a known allergy to ZYPITAMAG or any of its ingredients.
- You have active liver problems, including some abnormal liver test results.
- You are nursing, pregnant or may become pregnant, as it may harm the baby.
- You are currently taking cyclosporine or gemfibrozil.

### What are the most common side effects of ZYPITAMAG?

The most common side effects of ZYPITAMAG in clinical studies were:

- Back pain
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Muscle pain
- Pain in the legs or arms

This is not a complete list of side effects. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information.

**You are encouraged to report negative side effects of all drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.**

### How should I store and take ZYPITAMAG?

- Store ZYPITAMAG tablets at room temperature, in a dry place, and out of the reach of children.
- ZYPITAMAG can be taken at any time of day, with or without food.
- Swallow the tablet whole. Do not split, crush, dissolve, or chew.

**For additional information please see the ZYPITAMAG Brief Summary located on the following page.**

### What is the most important information I should know and talk to my doctor about?

- Call your healthcare provider or get help right away if you experience any symptoms of an allergic reaction, such as rash, itching, or hives.
- Muscle problems may be an early sign of rare, serious conditions. Tell your doctor right away if you have any unexplained muscle pain, weakness, or tenderness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever, or if these muscle signs or symptoms persist after discontinuing ZYPITAMAG.
- Serious liver problems have been reported rarely in patients taking statins, including pitavastatin. Your doctor should do liver tests before you start, and if you have symptoms of liver problems while you are taking ZYPITAMAG. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you feel more tired than usual, have a loss of appetite, upper belly pain, dark-colored urine, or yellowing of the skin or eyes.
- Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions and medications you take including nonprescription medicines, vitamins, or herbal supplements.
- Increases in blood sugar levels have been reported with statins, including pitavastatin.
- Tell your doctor about your alcohol use.

### Other important information I should know about ZYPITAMAG.

- ZYPITAMAG has not been studied to evaluate its effect on reducing heart-related disease or death.
- ZYPITAMAG is available by prescription only.

PA-ZYP-AJ-01

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## Important Facts ZYPITAMAG® (pitavastatin) tablets ZI-PITA-MAG

### Information for Patients about ZYPITAMAG (pitavastatin tablets):

Please read the following information completely before you or a family member begin taking ZYPITAMAG and when refilling your prescription in case the information has been updated since your last refill. The information presented here is meant as a brief summary of information that may be discussed with your doctor if ZYPITAMAG is suggested as an option to assist with your cholesterol control. If you would like more information, please consult your doctor or pharmacist about ZYPITAMAG. Be sure to always follow your doctor's instructions when taking statins, including ZYPITAMAG.

### What is ZYPITAMAG?

- ZYPITAMAG (an FDA approved prescription medicine for adults 18 years and older) when combined with heart-healthy diet and exercise helps to reduce LDL-C ("Bad Cholesterol") and triglycerides. It can also raise HDL-C ("Good Cholesterol").
- ZYPITAMAG is in a class of drugs called statins.
- The effect of ZYPITAMAG on reducing heart-related disease or death has not been determined.

### What important information should I know about ZYPITAMAG?

- ZYPITAMAG can cause muscle problems in some people called myopathy and rhabdomyolysis which can occur at anytime during treatment. Muscle problems can increase with high doses, as you get older, with kidney or some thyroid problems, and when used with certain medications.
- Liver test results may become abnormal while taking ZYPITAMAG. It is recommended that liver testing be conducted before and during treatment with ZYPITAMAG.
- Increases in blood sugars have been reported with statins, including pitavastatin.

### What are the possible side effects of ZYPITAMAG?

**Serious side effects may include:**

- Muscle problems may be an early sign of a rare problem that could lead to kidney problems. Call your doctor right away if you experience unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness, particularly if accompanied by fever or a general feeling of discomfort.
- Liver problems may occur. Your doctor should do a liver test before you start and while you are taking ZYPITAMAG.

**When on ZYPITAMAG some common side effects include:**

- Back Pain
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Muscle pain
- Pain in the legs or arms

**You are encouraged to report negative side effects of all drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.**

ZYPITAMAG is a Medicure product and is available only by prescription.

### Who should NOT take ZYPITAMAG?

- ZYPITAMAG is not recommended for those with active liver disease, including certain abnormal liver test results and women that are pregnant or nursing.
- People taking cyclosporine or gemfibrozil should also not take ZYPITAMAG.
- Anyone allergic to any of the components of ZYPITAMAG should not take ZYPITAMAG.

### Can other medications affect your treatment with ZYPITAMAG?

**Yes, other medications may affect ZYPITAMAG, you should consult with your doctor if you take any of the following:**

- Erythromycin
- Rifampin
- Niacin, gemfibrozil, fibrates or colchicine

### What should I talk to my doctor about when taking ZYPITAMAG?

- Call your healthcare provider if you experience any symptoms of an allergic reaction, such as a rash, itching, or hives.
- Muscle problems may be an early sign of a rare, serious condition. Tell your doctor right away if you have unexplained muscle pain, weakness, or tenderness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever, or if these muscle signs or symptoms persist after discontinuing ZYPITAMAG.
- Serious liver problems have been reported rarely in patients taking statins, including pitavastatin. Tell your healthcare provider if you feel more tired than usual, have a loss of appetite, upper belly pain, dark-colored urine, or yellowing of the skin or eyes.
- Tell your doctor if you consume alcoholic beverages.
- Tell your doctor about all medications you take.

### How should I store and take ZYPITAMAG?

- Store ZYPITAMAG at room temperature, in a dry place, protected from light and keep out of the reach of children.
- ZYPITAMAG is taken as one tablet per day and should be taken at the same time each day. ZYPITAMAG can be taken with or without food.
- Swallow the tablet whole. Do not split, crush, dissolve, or chew.
- If you or someone else take too much ZYPITAMAG and are concerned about an overdose, call your doctor and/or local Poison Control Center.

### Need more information?

The risk information provided here is not comprehensive. To learn more, talk about ZYPITAMAG with your doctor or pharmacist.

**The FDA approved labelling can be found at www.zypitamag.com or call 1-833-ZYP4YOU**

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SPECIAL REPORT

# The NICEST PLACES in AMERICA

HOPE · HELP · HEART

*Take a trip with us around the country, to places where good people are making good things happen*

The
NICEST
PLACES in
AMERICA

AND THE TOP HONOR GOES TO …

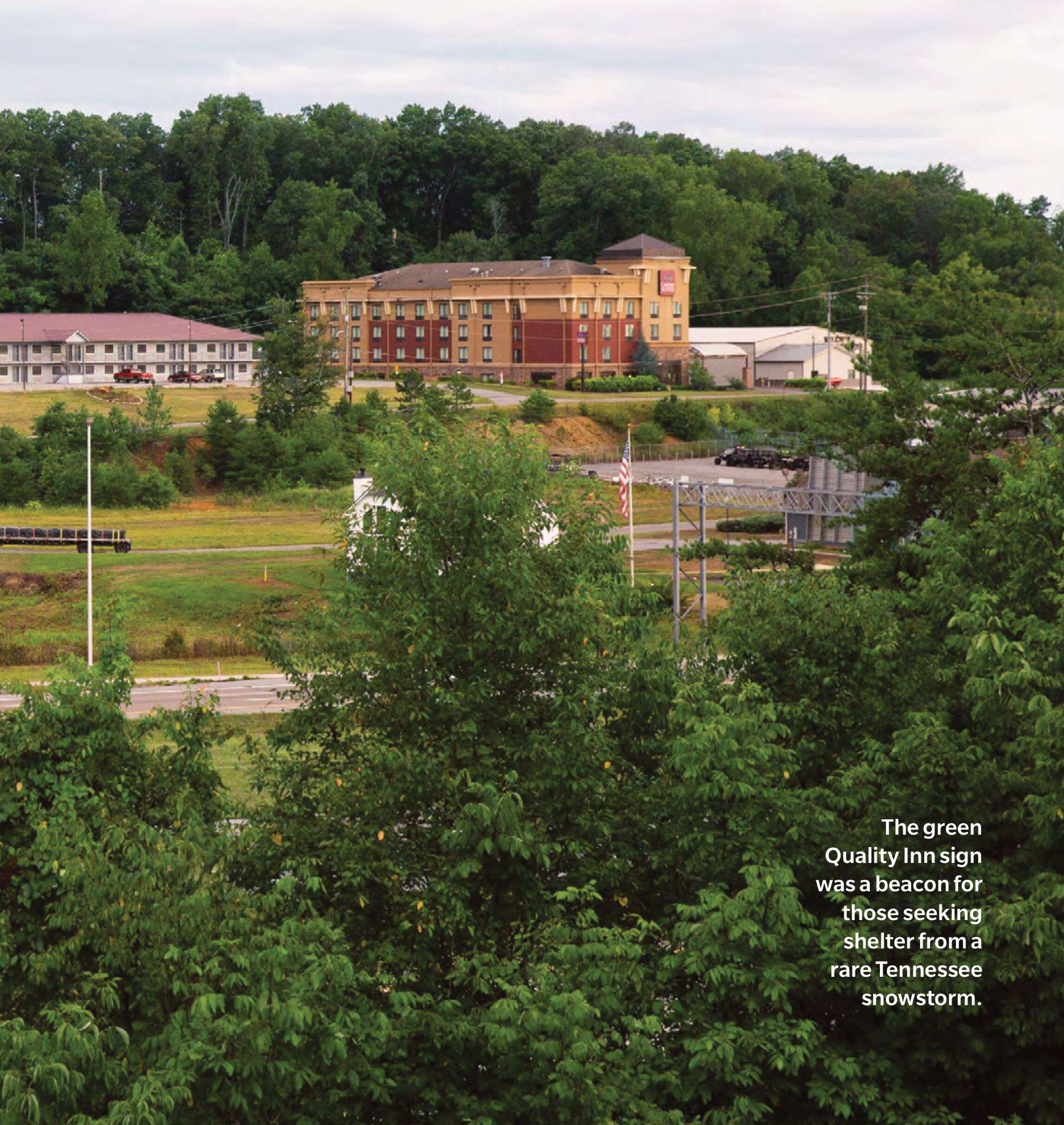
# QUALITY INN in

BY *Emma Taubenfeld and Bill Hangley Jr.*

QUALITY INN

# KODAK, TENNESSEE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Jessica Tezak*



The green Quality Inn sign was a beacon for those seeking shelter from a rare Tennessee snowstorm.

**"We will take care of you," Sean Patel posted on Facebook.**

FOR MICHELLE AND James Hundley, it was a moment of truth. Ahead of them lay a snowy, icy road. Behind them, their cold, unheated house. In the valley below, a warm, welcoming room at the Quality Inn in Kodak, Tennessee. All the Hundleys had to do was get there, and Sean Patel, the hotel owner, would do the rest.

In the freezing days to come, the Hundleys would become part of Patel's extended family, and his modest hotel would become their temporary home. They'd be warm, they'd be fed, and they wouldn't be asked to pay anything they couldn't afford. So would dozens of others just like them.

But first there was the little matter of getting past the snow. Winter storms aren't unheard of in eastern Tennessee, but the one that hit Kodak in December 2020 proved historic. People across the region fell asleep on Christmas Eve dreaming of a white Christmas, but the holiday brought dark clouds and plunging temperatures. As the wind picked up, trees fell, taking down utility lines. Snow blew, pipes froze, and power and phone service went out. More than 44,000 Tennesseans would wake to find themselves celebrating Christmas without electricity.

The Hundleys were among them. The couple live on 35 acres on the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains. The storm had quickly left their house freezing and dark, and for two nights they slept in their truck. But after 58 hours without power, they'd had enough. It was time to move to warmer quarters. The only problem: There was no room at the neighboring hotels. At least, not for local residents like the Hundleys.

That's a familiar story around Kodak, where tourists are the lifeblood of the economy and where hotel signs reading "no locals" are not unheard of.

Kodak is a tiny town in Sevier County, nestled in a narrow valley southeast of Knoxville. Once known mainly for logging and farming, the rural area now relies on visitors who come to the area, drawn to the nearby Great Smoky Mountains National Park or the Dollywood amusement park.

Dozens of hotels line the highways. Most aren't cheap, and rates climb during the holidays. But many hotels also had a policy against renting

rooms to local residents, concerned they might use the rooms for things they didn't want to do in their homes, even for criminal activity. Even in the face of a massive storm that knocked out power in the region, those hotels refused to lift their "no locals" rule.

Facing the double whammy of high prices and discrimination, their truck was looking like the Hundleys' only option. That is, until Michelle stumbled upon a Facebook post from the nearby Quality Inn.

"Hello neighbors! If you are affected by the power outages, please call us at Quality Inn in Kodak, right off Exit 407. We will take care of you," Patel wrote on the hotel's page. "We are not charging the usual holiday or weekend rates. We had a few cancellations and have allocated those rooms to help out."

Not only would the hotel not lock out locals or use the emergency as an excuse to price gouge, Patel promised to keep rates down, eventually locking them in as low as corporate regulations would allow: $25 per night.

It was the lifeline the Hundleys needed. They called the Quality Inn and were promised a room if they could get there safely. James pointed their truck down the mountain road

The "amazing" Quality Inn staff; Patel and his son Rudy (opposite) with groceries they'd bought to share.

and navigated the icy roads, and, 45 treacherous minutes later, the Hundleys spotted the green Quality Inn sign rising from West Dumplin Valley Road, across from the Boot Barn and Mountain Motorsports.

The couple unloaded their overnight bag and stepped through the doors into the hotel lobby, where they experienced the first real warmth—physical and emotional—they had felt in days.

"They greeted us and asked how they can help, even after we checked in," says Michelle. "We didn't have anything. We couldn't afford anything. Sean didn't have to do what he did."

But if you ask Patel, 37, he'll likely say that he did have to. An immigrant from India, Patel, who was born a Hindu but attended a Christian school, believes in the concept of karma, a spiritual principle held by Hindus and Buddhists that those who do good to others will receive good in return. It's an idea that aligns nicely with the traditional values of his new home in the American South.

**Patel came to America** in 2004 and settled in Tennessee, drawn by its friendly reputation. "I saw how much people helped each other in the South, and it got to me," he explains. "It's not always about money."

An aunt taught him the ins and outs of his new country while piling food on his plate at mealtimes and giving him a bed to sleep in each night. Soon Patel was on his own two feet, earning a degree from the University of Tennessee, running hotels to support his wife and son, and riding his motorcycle along the roads in and around Knoxville for fun.

Along the way, he never forgot how he'd started. "I had a family who took me in," Patel says.

So as the snow flew that Christmas, Patel knew his neighbors would need someone to take them in. As the freeze set in, he turned to Facebook. "We will take care of you," Patel wrote.

**It was Christmas Day,** when the Hundleys were still sleeping in their truck, when Carole and Paul Williams fortuitously saw Patel's post. The couple had started their Christmas by driving

into Kodak but soon found themselves cold, stranded, and worried. “It was like a blizzard,” says Carole. “I called my neighbor and she said not to come home.” They tried getting back but saw car after car stuck in the snow. Utility workers urged them to turn around. So the Williamses started looking for a place to stay.

Like the Hundleys, at first they had no luck with area hotels: either no rooms or none for them, thanks to those “no locals” restrictions. A friend of the Williamses’ spotted Patel’s Facebook post, and soon the couple were hauling down the highway while Patel texted to make sure they were OK. Carole wasn’t sure what they’d find when they arrived. “I was a little bit wary,” she recalls. After all, $25 a night is pretty cheap for a hotel room.

But she needn’t have worried. “We felt safe the minute we walked in,” Carole says. “They rolled out the red carpet.” Their room was clean and warm. They could stay for as long as they needed, staff told them. When the couple went downstairs for breakfast the next morning, they found a smiling, bespectacled man offering them hot coffee. It was Patel.

“Sean was standing there in the

dining area and was like, 'You guys going to stay for breakfast?'" Williams says.

From that day on, Patel's Quality Inn was packed. Between Christmas and New Year's Eve, all 60 rooms were booked, with as many as eight or nine family members sharing a room. The weather may have made a mess of the holidays for many in the area, but inside the inn, the Christmas spirit was alive and well—with Patel playing Santa, giving the gifts of electricity, water, warmth, and friendship.

By day, the halls filled with locals, tourists, and utility workers who stopped by to chat and sip hot coffee. By night, strands of lights twinkled quietly among the lobby's handmade Nativity displays. Patel and his guests called it their Christmas Village, complete with tiny houses, a chugging train, and Santa's sleigh hidden among the little trees that Patel's seven-year-old son, Rudra—aka Rudy—helped him set up.

And as the new year approached, with hundreds of area homes still without power, Patel let everyone know they had a friend out by the highway. Looking for a room? He'll try to supply one. In need of a shower?

**When Patel takes time off, it's often to ride his motorcycle in the nearby mountains with friends.**

"Bring your towels," he wrote on Facebook. "And guess what, it's free!"

As residents made their way to Dumplin Valley Road, the Facebook testimonials poured in:

"It is a blessing to know that in the midst of the darkness, there are still caring, thoughtful people that help in time of need!" wrote Chelle Renee.

"We spent last night there," posted Bryan Holloway. "First time since early Christmas Eve we had power and running water. Thank you so much!"

"Sean and staff are amazing!!" wrote April Fetzer Smith. "They have personally helped my family when we were stranded in the Smoky Mountains!"

No one who knows Patel was surprised by his generosity. Harold Hines lives in an extended-stay residence Patel owns, just behind the Quality Inn. Hines landed there four years ago after losing his business. When he was down and out, says Hines, Patel welcomed his family with open arms.

"You will never go hungry even if you don't have food," says Hines. "Sean has made this a home."

"I frequently ask him to dial it back a bit because he spends so much of his own money and energy to help others," says Patel's friend Steve Smith, who nominated the Quality Inn as the Nicest Place in America. "But he has such a big heart, I know he will only give more."

And he has. Patel owns a second hotel, the Segovia Lodge in Junction, Texas, near San Antonio. When a similar freeze hit there in February 2021, Patel let his guests stay and eat free all week. And when the Segovia property lost power too, stranded truckers kept the fire in the lobby fireplace going all night while guests slept on the lobby floor.

"It wasn't about who was Black, white, Democrat, Republican. COVID, or no COVID. Everyone was a family," says Shelly Shirley, a manager at the Segovia. "I've never witnessed someone like Sean."

Today, things there and in Kodak are back to (mostly) normal. But the next time there's trouble, the residents of Sevier County know where they'll find a safe haven.

"He helped a whole lot of people who didn't have anything," Michelle Hundley says of Sean Patel. "He was the only one who stepped up to help the locals." R

The NICEST PLACES in AMERICA

**SUN AND MOON RANCH** in Lexington, North Carolina

# Sharing the Sun and Moon

BY *Caroline Fanning*

TRAILS GET TOUGH
GIVE UP

COURTESY SHANNAN HEARNE

SHANNAN HEARNE'S OLDEST dream was to own a ranch. From the moment she was first placed in the saddle at age two, she had always felt most comfortable on horseback. In February 2020, her dream finally came true, when she and her "partner-in-farm," Cory Conley, opened the gates of Sun and Moon Ranch. Then, just a month later, the country spiraled into COVID-19 lockdown. Soon Hearne's vision began to grow into something bigger.

With eight acres of pastures and an abundance of sunshine and fresh air, there was no safer way for frightened neighbors to get out of the house. The ranch, Hearne realized, should be for everybody. "It didn't feel right to suddenly become protective of what

Shannan Hearne (oppposite) wants everyone who loves horses and ranch life to have easy access.

I thought I was being a good steward of," she says.

Sun and Moon Ranch is nestled between the Appalachian Mountains and the Atlantic coast, in Lexington, North Carolina. Sure, you can sign up for riding lessons or board your horse. But you can also drop by to play with the chickens, goats, and dogs. Wander through the vegetable garden. Break bread—and crab legs—during the farm's low-country boils, when pots of shrimp, scallops, sausage, and corn cover the length of a newspaper-covered picnic table. Or join the younger ranchers playing on the big pile of freshly dug dirt.

Hearne, a digital marketer by day, now saw the ranch as something more than a business—it would be a place the community could call home.

As the pandemic deepened, locals began to gather there, not just for the free cookouts and bonfires, but for the chance to put up a hammock when they wanted some peace. RVs and campers were welcome to pull in for a quiet night after a day on the road. "I had a vision for the space being therapeutic for whoever the universe sent our way—horses or people," says Hearne.

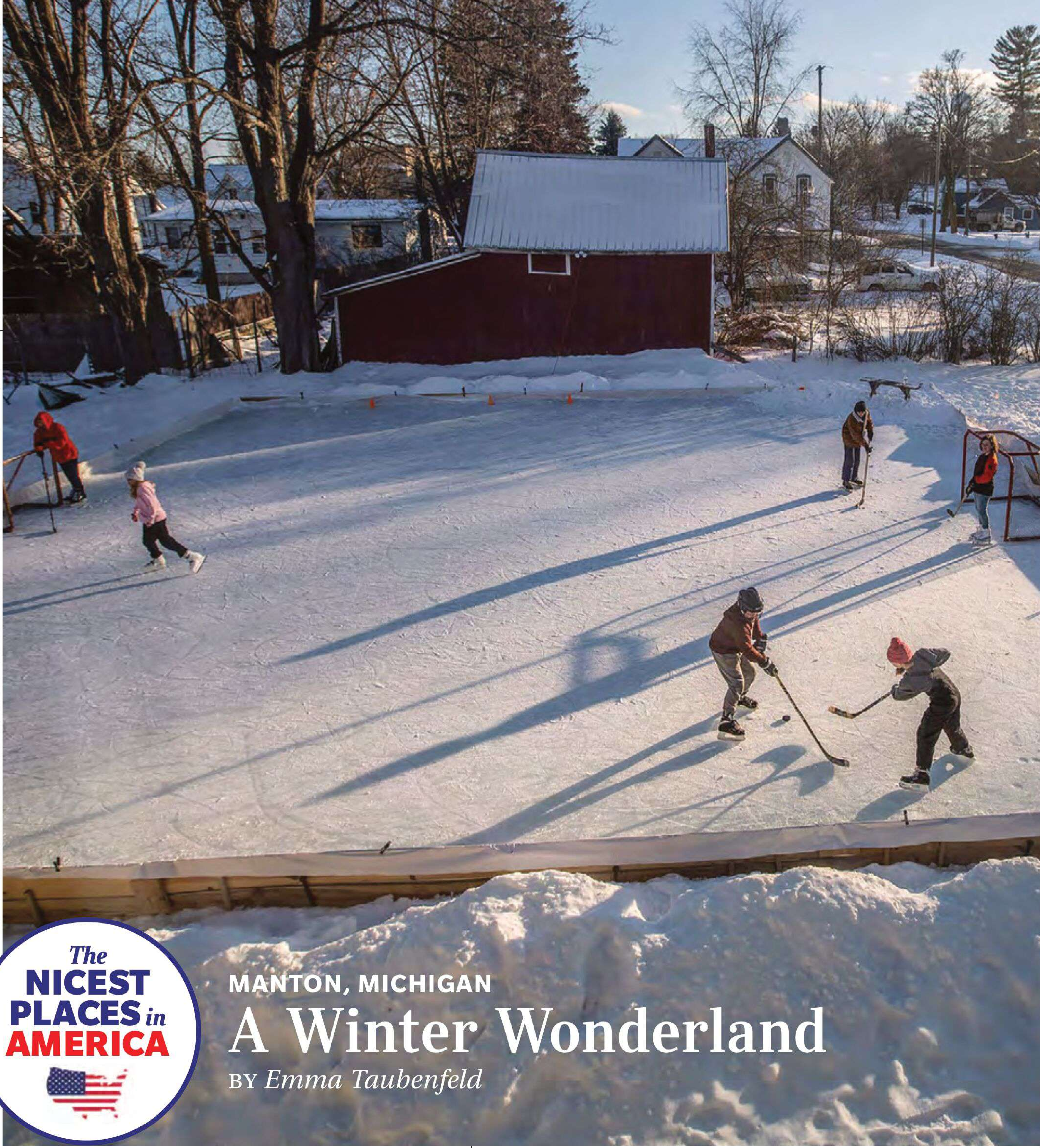
One of those people, now 15, was born without fingers on one hand. His grandmother brought him to Sun and Moon for riding lessons. Learning to control a horse with one hand helped him better manage his disability, and he grew closer to his grandmother over their shared love of horses. Plus, a special bond with two of Hearne's 18 rescued horses, Annie and Honey, was a real leg up confidence-wise.

"There is something empowering about controlling a thousand-pound animal, and I believe this is especially true for children or anyone who struggles with any sort of self-esteem issues," Hearne says.

Another boy became selectively mute after being bullied because of his autism. Lesson by lesson, Hearne watched him slowly come out of his shell. Taking the reins, literally, helped him do so in his daily life too.

"I could see how the empowerment of riding was helping him feel once again in control of the world around him," says Hearne. "He went from not answering questions to literally talking our ears off." And there's no nicer sound, especially when answered by an affectionate whinny from a four-legged best friend. R

COURTESY SHANNAN HEARNE



The NICEST PLACES in AMERICA

MANTON, MICHIGAN

# A Winter Wonderland

BY *Emma Taubenfeld*

On Christmas Eve 2020, fire trucks rushed to the Chittle home in the sleepy little town of Manton, Michigan. But it wasn't because of a Christmas nightmare. Far from it.

Winters can be long and tough this far north. Add the COVID-19 pandemic, and Scott Chittle knew something had to be done to bring some cheer to the 1,555 people who call Manton home.

Chittle, 51, lives in a big yellow house with his mother and two children. When he was three, his father built an ice-skating rink in their

RYAN GARZA/USA TODAY NETWORK

**The ice rink brightened up one of the darkest winters in memory.**

backyard, where Chittle and his buddies would spend endless hours over the coming years playing hockey. That, thought Chittle, is what the children in this community need.

One problem: Chittle had no clue how to build an ice rink. Luckily, there's YouTube. Soon after watching a tutorial, he was smoothing out a 3,000-square-foot section of his yard, ordering a massive tarp large enough to cover it, and buying lumber to create the walls. Now he needed the ice. That's where those fire trucks came in. It took 12 of them to spray enough water to fill the plot. Then he waited for Mother Nature to do the rest.

It wasn't long before Chittle's backyard became a Manton hot spot. The smell of grilled hot dogs and burning firewood filled the air. Lights strung over the ice added sparkle. And the laughter and shrieks of children playing hockey or performing figure eights made their parents smile.

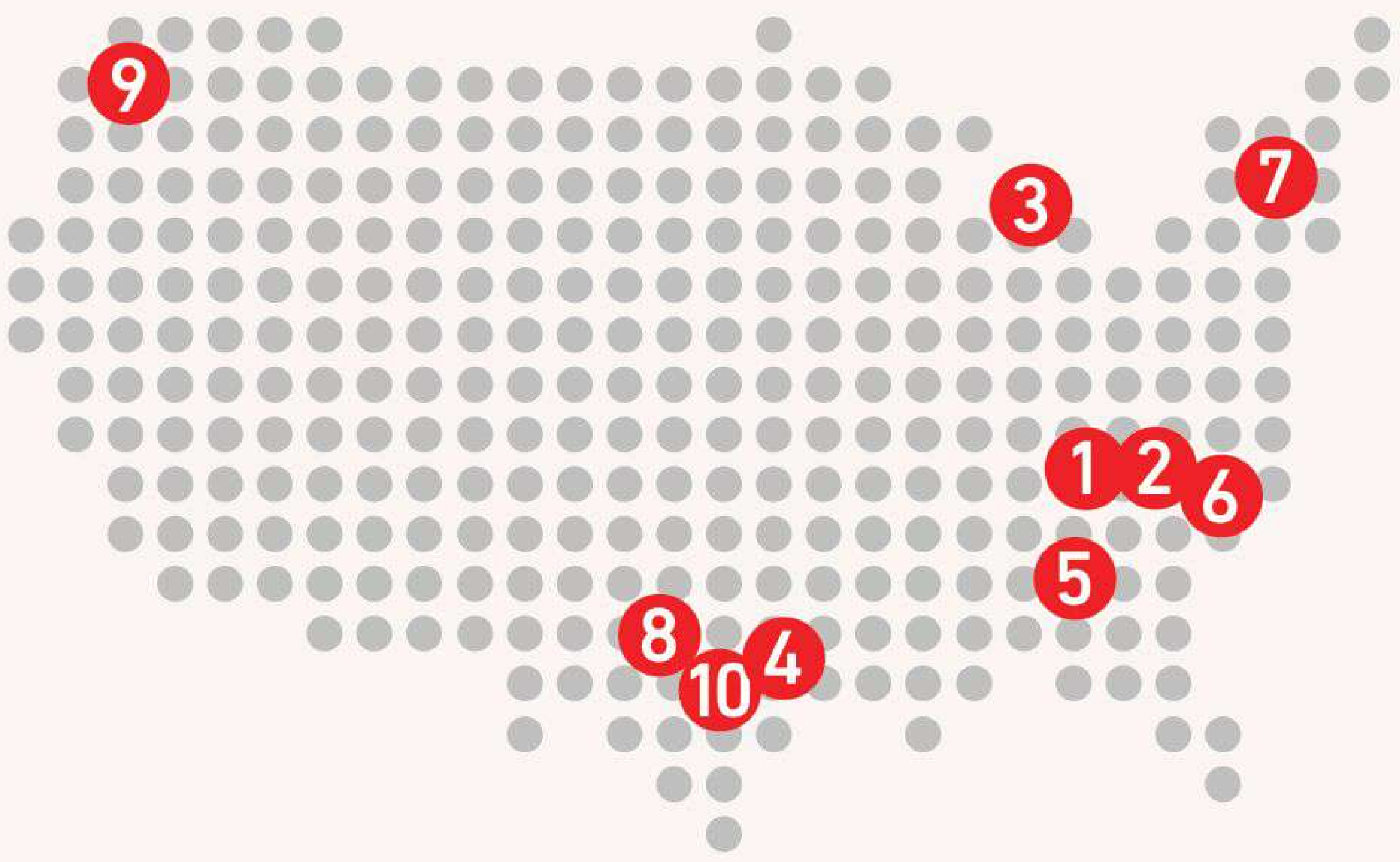
But the kindness didn't stop with Chittle. When word got out that he'd spent $1,400 out of his own pocket to build his rink of dreams, neighbors, strangers, and businesses pitched in $3,000 to cover the costs and more.

For Chittle, the ice rink was always about more than kids blowing off some steam. It was about surviving even the darkest times. "I want to show the rest of the world," says Chittle, "what a little effort, the best intentions, and community can do, not only for others but for the souls of all." R

The NICEST PLACES in AMERICA

# Our Finalists

These are this year's Nicest Places in America.
Read nominations and full stories at **rd.com/nicest**.



1 **Quality Inn** in Kodak, Tennessee

2 **Sun & Moon Ranch** in Lexington, North Carolina

3 **Manton,** Michigan

4 **Houston,** Texas

5 **Brooks,** Georgia

6 **Lake City,** South Carolina

7 **Littleton,** New Hampshire

8 **Austin Hills,** Texas

9 **Renton,** Washington

10 **Sugar Land,** Texas

## The Road to the Nicest Places

Back in March, *Reader's Digest* set out on a search for Nice Places. We picked up nominations from our readers around the country, publishing the nicest of the nice on RD.com. You readers voted for your favorites, and after a thorough vetting process and some tough decisions, our editors and judges (below) named the Nicest Places in America.

**MITCH ALBOM**
*Philanthropist and author of* Tuesdays with Morrie *and* The Stranger in the Lifeboat

**BRUCE KELLEY**
*Editor-at-large,* Reader's Digest

**BONNIE KINTZER**
*President and CEO, Trusted Media Brands*

**AMI L. McREYNOLDS**
*Chief equity and programs officer, Feeding America*

**KELLI HARDING, MD**
*Author of* The Rabbit Effect: Live Longer, Happier, and Healthier with the Groundbreaking Science of Kindness

**DEEJRA LEE**
*Community leader in Buchanan, Michigan, 2020's Nicest Place in America*

**GERI WEIS-CORBLEY**
*Editor-in-chief, Good News Network*

MAP BY JOHN YUN

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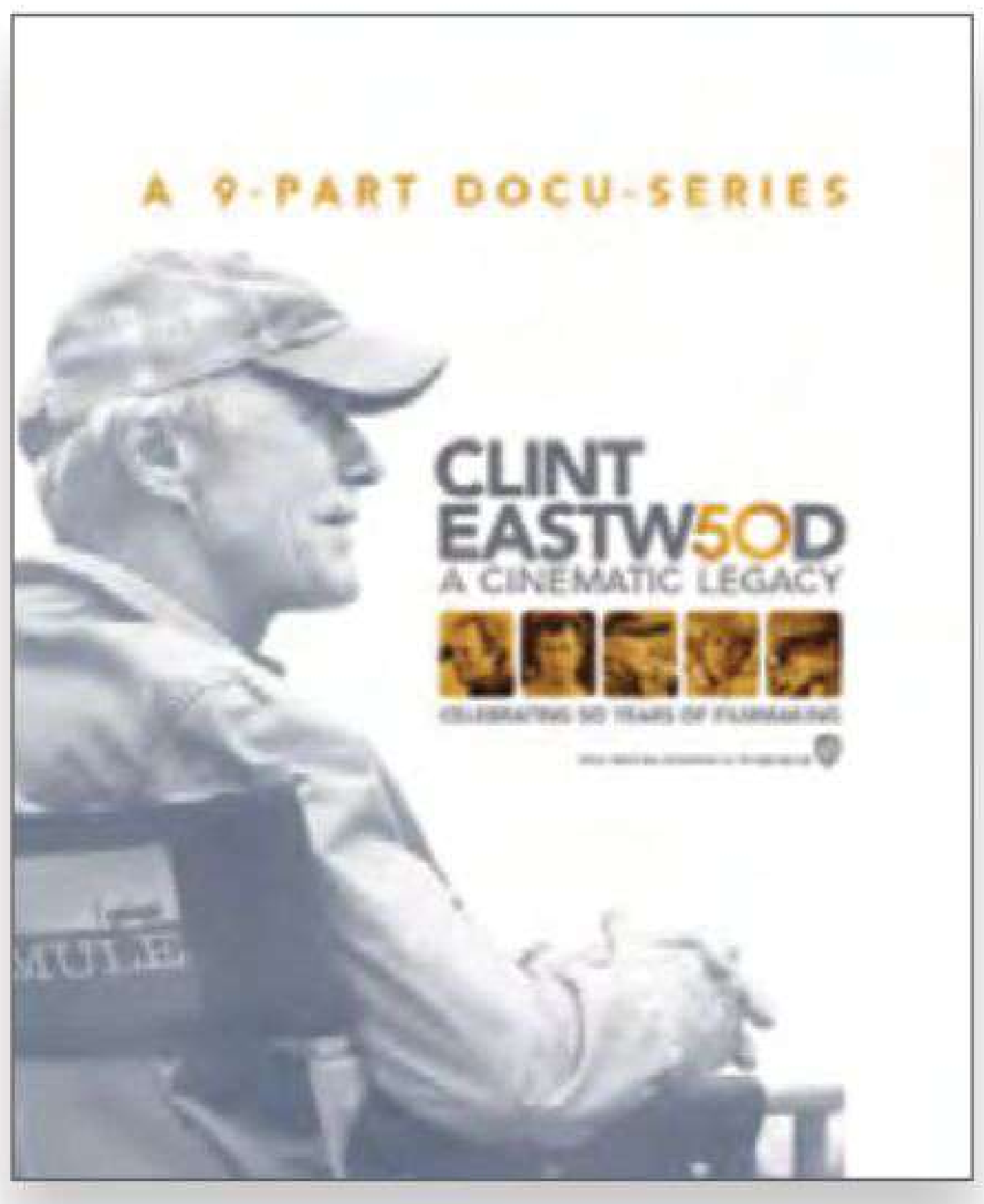
# CONNECTIONS:

*Your link to values and insights each month*



## CLINT EASTWOOD: A CINEMATIC LEGACY

Few artists in film history cast a longer shadow than Clint Eastwood. Warner Bros. celebrates this cinematic icon with a nine-episode docuseries covering the entire breadth of Eastwood's remarkable career.

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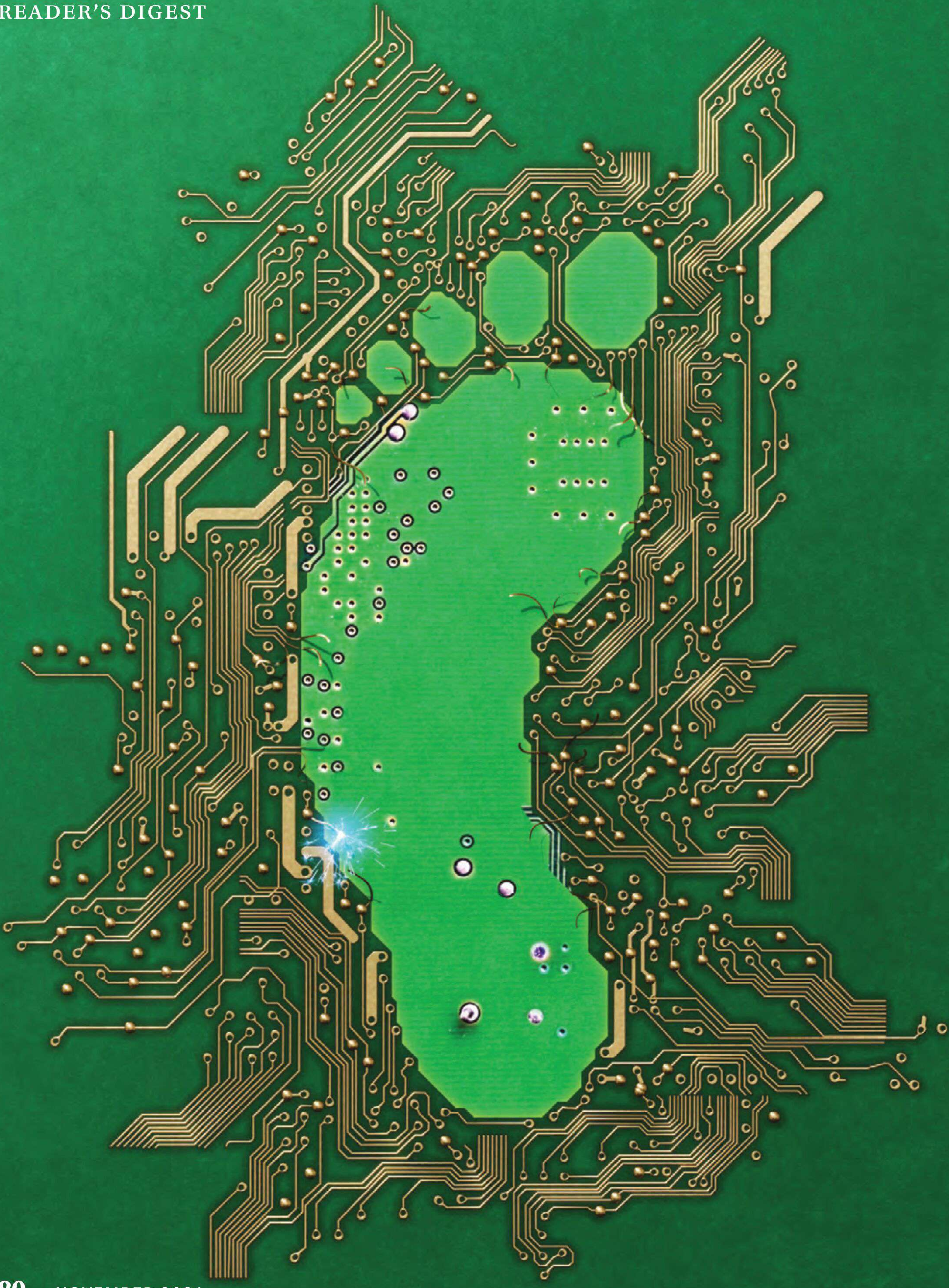


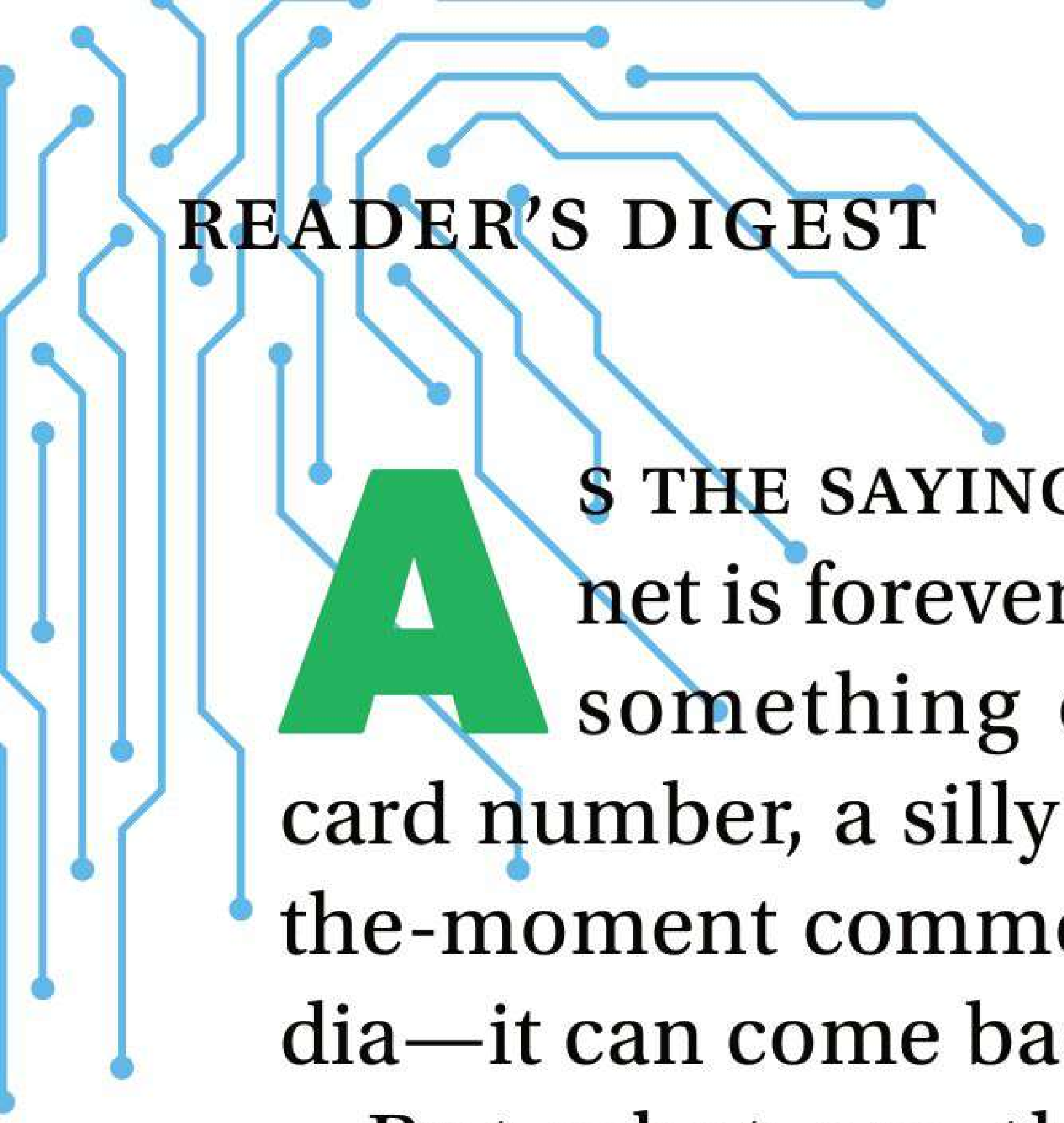
COVER STORY

# DELETE YOUR INTERNET FOOTPRINT

*With spies lurking everywhere, how can you keep yourself safe? Here are 25 smart steps, from the editor of HowtoGeek.com.*

BY *Chris Hoffman*

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS *by Justin Metz*



AS THE SAYING goes: The Internet is forever. Once you've put something online—a credit card number, a silly photo, a heat-of-the-moment comment on social media—it can come back to haunt you.

But what are the risks, really? "There are two worst-case scenarios," says Thorin Klosowski, privacy and security editor at Wirecutter, a product-recommendation service owned by the *New York Times*. "The most obvious one is a security issue. Everyone's e-mail address and basic details are leaked somewhere online, and if you reuse passwords, that means a nefarious person will have an easier time getting into your accounts."

The problem is getting worse: Identity theft cases more than doubled in 2020, according to the Federal Trade Commission, with reported monetary losses from fraud overall climbing to $3.3 billion from $1.8 billion in 2019.

"The second worst-case scenario is more primal: embarrassment," says Klosowski. And sometimes the pricks to our pride are far more personal than blushing over an unflattering photo. "Many of us store our most intimate thoughts in a digital notes app, draft e-mails we never send, or pour out our private feelings into a direct message to a friend. This is the type of thing that can get leaked online, either through a provider being negligent or through your own misunderstanding of the often-confusing privacy settings in the software and services."

With these sorts of slip-ups, the stakes can be high. But you're not powerless. You can stand up for your privacy and begin to take control, starting right now. Here's how:

## 1

## Mix Up Your Passwords

If you always use the same password, no matter how carefully crafted it may be, it's probably already out there.

The 2017 Equifax breach that resulted in the loss of 147 million Americans' public records was big news, but we don't always hear about the smaller-scale breaches, which are frequent. They occur when criminals purchase leaked databases of usernames (usually e-mail addresses) and passwords on dark web marketplaces. Then the crooks try these combinations, hoping to access people's other accounts. So use a strong, unique password for every account.

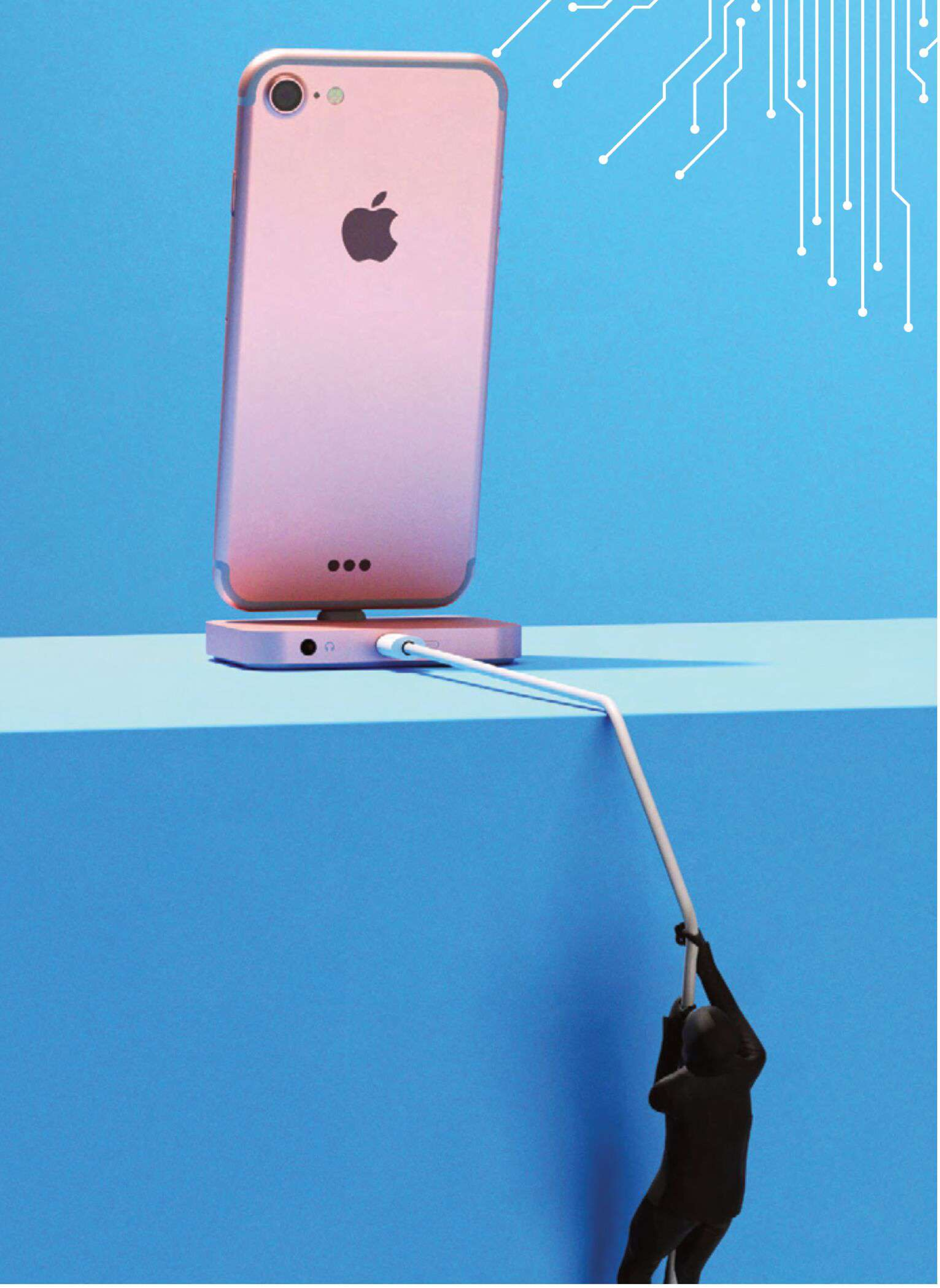
## 2

## Use a Password Manager

How can you possibly remember all your passwords? You can't. But if you enlist the help of a password manager, you need to remember just one password—for it. The manager will do the rest, creating strong passwords and automatically filling them in for you.

The service 1Password offers an excellent manager for a few dollars a month ($3/month for one person,

MICROVONE/GETTY IMAGES (VECTOR CIRCUIT BOARD)



or $5/month for a family of up to five people). Bitwarden is a good free option. Or use the free manager built into your browser.

## 3

## Find Out Whether Criminals Have Your Information

Visit haveibeenpwned.com to see whether your e-mail address, phone number, or passwords are included in any leaked databases available to criminals. Spoiler: Your information has probably been involved in multiple leaks. (The leaks on HaveIBeenPwned are just the tip of the iceberg of what criminals have access to.)

## 4

## Delete Old Accounts

You probably have a lot of online accounts you no longer use, and they might contain personal information. Delete them. Don’t leave whatever details you may have shared sitting around so they can be discovered by criminals—or misused if an unscrupulous company one day buys and abuses your data.

To learn how to delete an account, perform a web search such as “delete old e-mail account.” You can also visit justdelete.me, which has instructions for deleting many different types of accounts. Or go right to the company; check its online support pages or contact customer support and ask for account deletion.

## 5

### Download Your Data

Deleting an account doesn't mean you lose everything you had on that particular site. For example, you can easily download all the data associated with a Facebook or Google account and do whatever you want with it. Just be sure to keep backup copies of everything you consider important.

## 6

### Find Old Accounts to Delete

You probably don't remember every online account you've ever created. To find old accounts you might want to delete, search your e-mails for terms like "welcome," "verify," "your account," and "free trial." The e-mails that pop up will remind you of accounts you've signed up for so you can then choose which ones to get rid of.

It's even easier if you already track your passwords in a password manager. Just scroll through the list to find accounts you no longer use.

## 7

### Delete Old E-Mails Too

Do you really need to keep old e-mails forever? They contain a lot of personal details that could be useful to identity thieves.

Also, under the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, e-mails stored on a web server—such as Gmail—are considered "abandoned" after 180 days, and the government can access them without a warrant. Despite bipartisan agreement and a unanimous vote in the House to approve the Email Privacy Act in 2016, which would close this loophole, the bill has not passed the Senate.

Consider deleting old e-mails, possibly after downloading a copy. This protects your correspondence from both hackers and warrantless government surveillance.

## 8

## Search Your Usernames Online

Head to a search engine and search for your name, as well as any usernames you've gone by online. The results show you where your name appears on the public Web. In all likelihood, your social media profiles will pop up in the results. That means they will also show up for other people who search for you.

## 9

## Hide Social Media Profiles from Search Engines

Want to wipe these personal details from the Internet? You can make your social media accounts vanish from search results by visiting each site that came up in your initial search and changing the privacy settings. Each site works a bit differently; for guidance, search for "privacy settings" and the name of each site. While you're cleaning things up, you can also remove comments you've posted, delete accounts, or ask websites to take down your personal information.

## 10

## Control Social Media Privacy Settings

You may also want to restrict who can see what you post on social media sites. For example, on Facebook you can limit who can find you, who can see what you post, and what Facebook shares about you with other companies. To get started, go to the Facebook home page and click the down arrow in the top right corner, then select Settings & Privacy. A good guide to Facebook privacy settings can be found at consumerreports.org/privacy/facebook-privacy-settings/.

## 11

## Delete Old Social Media Posts

Facebook was created back in 2004. By now, the college students who shared their party photos on the social media service in its infancy are in their mid-30s. Fortunately, Facebook has a Manage Activity tool that lets you delete or archive posts older than a certain date. Instagram allows you to delete or archive individual posts. Only you can see the things you've archived on either platform.

Twitter has no built-in way to delete old tweets, but third-party tools such as TweetDelete can delete them, either automatically or based on specific criteria that you set. The tool can even remove your likes on other users' tweets.

## 12

## Opt Out of People Finder Websites

Beyond social media, countless "people finder" websites (Spokeo is one example) host databases full of personal information. This includes names, addresses, ages, phone numbers, and even court records. These services—the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse lists hundreds of them—often gather this information through public records, and they're not always accurate.

You can opt out, but you'll have to do it from each service separately. Be warned that companies may opt you back in, so you may have to opt out more than once.

Services such as PrivacyDuck and DeleteMe promise to do the work for you, but they cost hundreds of dollars a year and don't cover every one of the people finders, so they may not be worth it unless you are a public figure or are actively being harassed.

## 13

## Know How California's New Privacy Act Affects You

The California Consumer Privacy Act took effect on January 1, 2020. If you are a California resident, it gives you the right to know what data a company is collecting, tell it to stop selling yours, and request that it be deleted.

California's Office of the Attorney General offers a guide to your rights under the CCPA, at oag.ca.gov/privacy/ccpa.

Even if you aren't in California, the CCPA may still benefit you. In complying with the law, many companies now offer increased transparency to all. For example, Microsoft announced it will "honor California's new privacy rights throughout the United States."

## 14

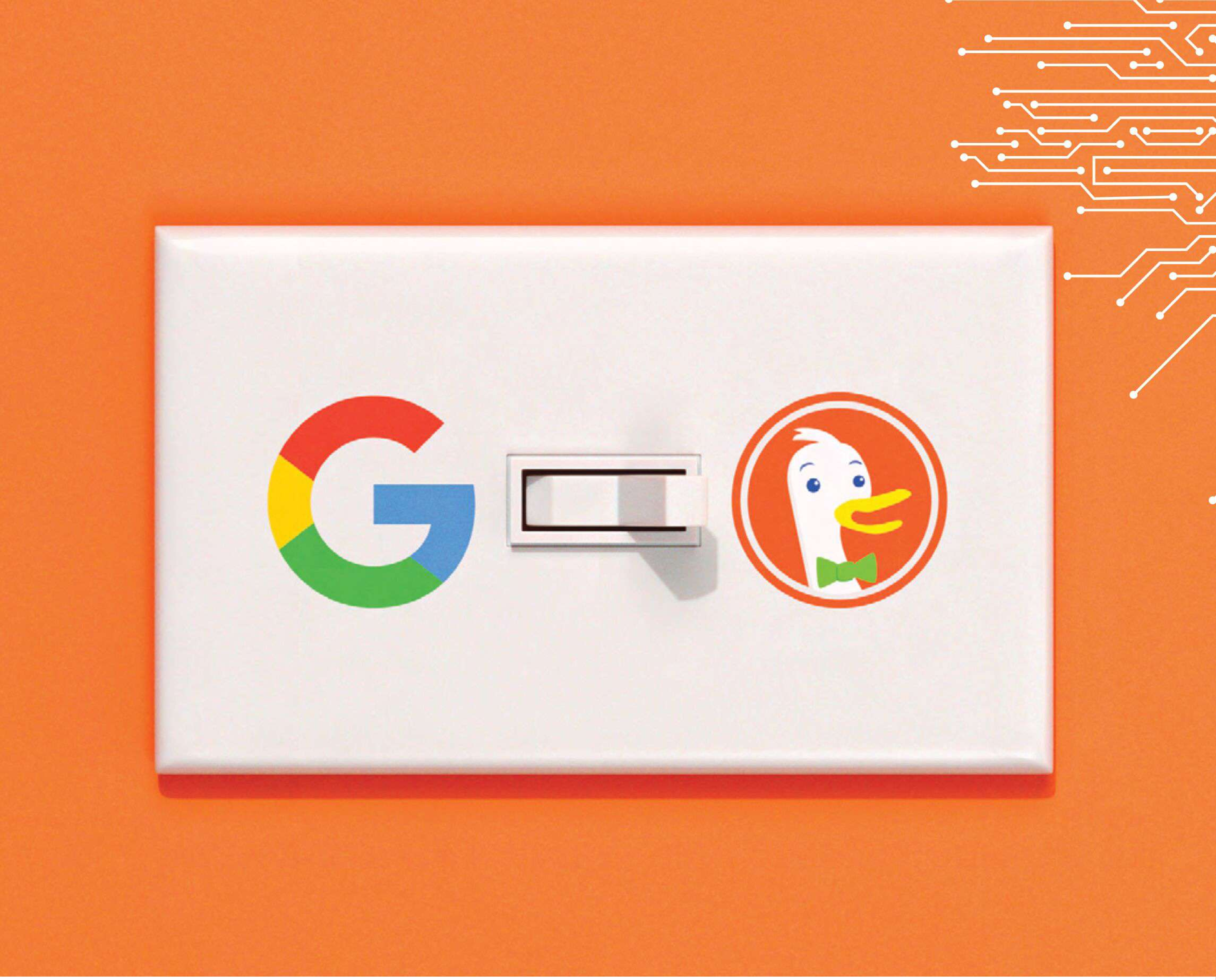
## Search with DuckDuckGo

To limit the data gathered on you in the future, use the more private search engine DuckDuckGo. Make it your default search engine on all your devices by going to duckduckgo.com and clicking the "add" button. Unlike Google and other big-name search engines, DuckDuckGo doesn't track your searches and link them to you, so it won't show you targeted ads or personalized search results, either.

## 15

## Tell Google to Stop Tracking You

Even if you want to keep using Google, you can activate more privacy settings to keep the Internet giant from tracking all your web searches—which it



does automatically if you're logged in to Google (while using Gmail, for example). Even YouTube, which is owned by Google, tracks a history of the videos you watch.

But this tracking is optional. You can tell Google to stop collecting your data in the future and to delete whatever it has already collected. To pause collection and delete previously collected data, visit the My Google Activity page. To get there, click on your Google profile photo, go to Manage Your Google Account, and, in the left navigation panel, click Data & Privacy. Then, under History Settings, click My Activity and turn off any activity you don't want to save.

## 16

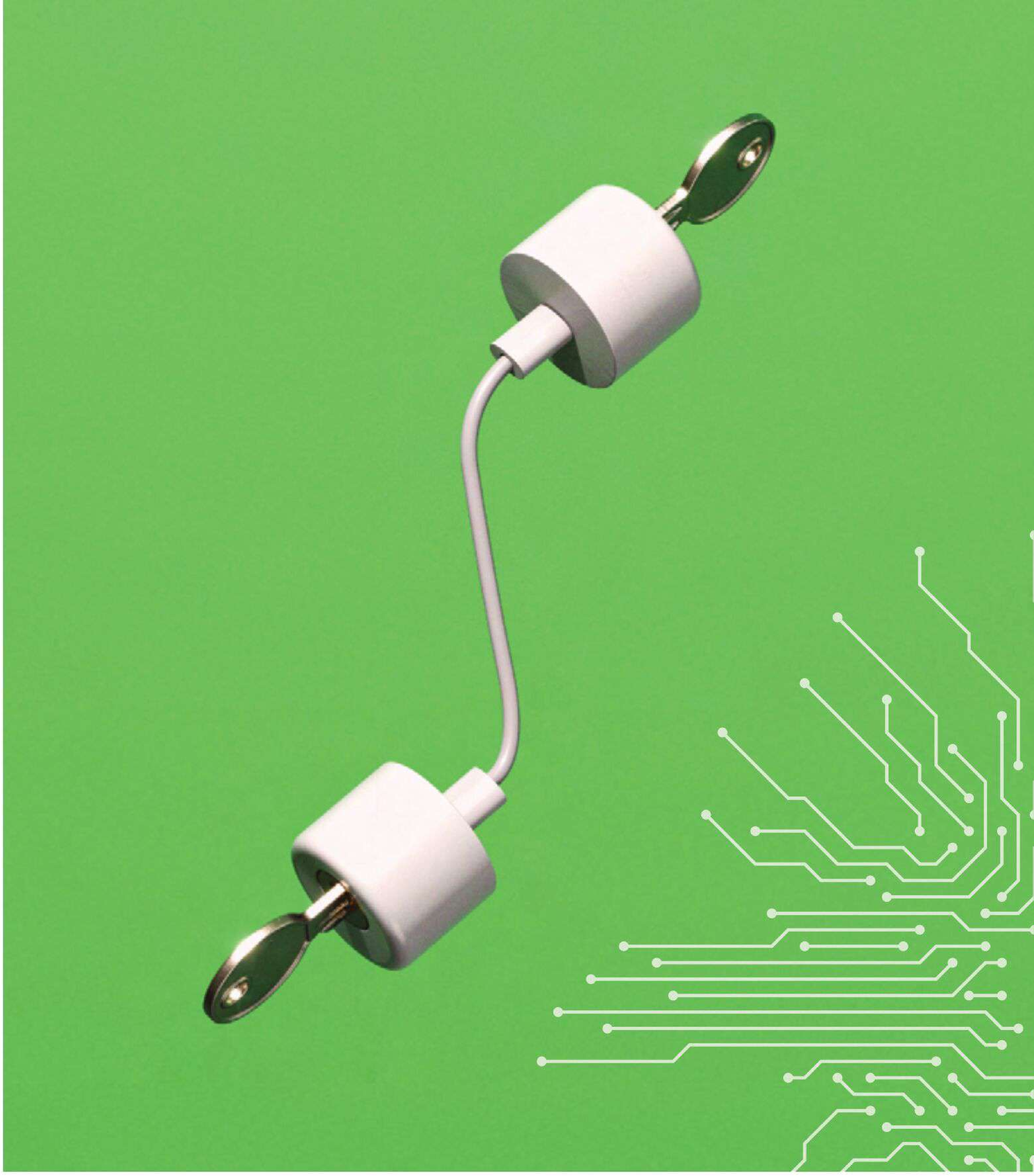
## Limit Who Has Your Location History

Something else Google may track about you, unless you tell it not to, is your location history. Depending on your settings, Google may store this information forever, building a database of your movements.

Google can gather this information

via smartphones with its Android operating system or if you install the Google Maps app on an iPhone and give it location access.

Here's how to stop it: On the My Google Activity page, select the option to pause collection of your location and delete your collected location data or tell Google to automatically delete it.



## 17
## Configure Your Browser for Privacy

Browser cookies are small pieces of information that websites can store in your browser to track you. Chrome is moving away from cookies and toward a technology called "FLoC," which will essentially make the browser track your search history and report your general interests to websites so they can feed you ads based on your perceived interests.

There are ways to limit this tracking, with ad blockers and browser extensions that protect privacy. But you can be tracked in other ways, including by your IP address, a number that identifies your Internet connection online. (Every device on your home network likely shares the same IP address.) One way to conceal your IP address is with a VPN.

## 18
## Use a VPN

A VPN, or virtual private network, creates a secure tunnel to the Internet, acting as a middleman between you and your Internet service provider by encrypting your connection. With a VPN, your Internet service provider can't see what websites you're accessing, and the websites you're accessing can see only the VPN's IP address, not your IP address.

If you've ever worked remotely, you've likely used your company's VPN. The privacy that VPNs provide is attractive not just to businesses but also to dissidents in repressive countries such as China to get around Internet censorship and shield their online activity.

When choosing a VPN, do some research, look up independent reviews, and be sure to pick a trustworthy one. Wirecutter recommends Mullvad, and also suggests the service IVPN for those who use multiple devices at once. Operating a VPN costs money, so many free VPNs are untrustworthy and may even sell your data to make a profit. A good VPN generally charges a subscription fee, often just a few dollars a month.

## 19

## Go Incognito

A VPN isn't a magic bullet. It's just one piece of the puzzle. Let's say you connect to a VPN, visit Google's website, and sign in to your Google account. Now Google knows who you are. Even if you don't sign in, websites can check your browser cookies to link your VPN activity to your previous browsing.

Use your browser's private-browsing mode to better protect your privacy while using a VPN. To go incognito on Chrome, click on the File menu in the upper left corner and select New Incognito Window. On Firefox, choose New Private Window.

## 20

## Switch to Privacy-Friendly Apps

Just like websites, the apps on our phones collect data about us. Until recently, finding out how various app companies use that data meant reading long and tedious privacy policies. But now it's getting a bit easier thanks to new features such as privacy labels in Apple's App Store, which tell you what type of data an app collects before you install it. There are usually multiple apps for the same purposes, so choose those that collect less data.

## 21

## Seek Out End-to-End Encryption

For improved privacy online, seek out services that use end-to-end encryption. With this type of security, your data can be seen only by you and the people you communicate with. Apple's iMessages use it, for example (iMessages are text messages between two Apple users, indicated by blue chat bubbles—as opposed to green text messages, which indicate a non-Apple user). Sites that employ end-to-end encryption often say so in order to advertise their enhanced security.

One communication app that uses end-to-end encryption is Signal. Owned by a nonprofit and popular with activists worldwide, it works on both Apple and Android products.

## 22

## Take Advantage of Apple's New Privacy Features

Apple has been a leader in introducing privacy features, and recently the company added even more with the newest operating systems, namely iOS 15, iPadOS 15, and macOS Monterey. Most of these features require iCloud+, an additional paid iCloud storage plan (starting at 99 cents/month). The included iCloud Private Relay service functions similarly to a VPN: It routes your Safari browsing traffic through an anonymous server. Websites will know the general region you're in but won't see your unique IP address as you browse.

When signing up for accounts or newsletters online, the Hide My Email feature in iCloud+ lets you create randomized unique e-mail addresses that forward e-mails to your real e-mail account. Senders can't see your real e-mail address, and you can deactivate a randomized e-mail address at any time—perfect for avoiding spam.

## 23

## Protect Your Mail

Even if you don't pay for iCloud+, be sure to look for the Mail Privacy

CREDIT CARD
BANK
1234 5678 9876 5432
Credit Card
1234 5678 9876 5432

Protection feature that pops up the first time you open Apple's Mail app. It will block tracking pixels, preventing people (and advertisers) from seeing when you opened their e-mails. When you load images in e-mails, Apple will hide your address from trackers.

## 24
## Remove Saved Payment Details

Don't save your payment details on online shopping sites. True, this makes it easier for you to buy the things you want, but it also makes it easier for criminals to gain access to your accounts and buy things as you. As a compromise, you may want to keep a credit card stored on sites you shop often but not on sites you use only occasionally.

## 25
## Be Careful About Sharing Info

Think twice before sharing any personal details anywhere online. At the time, sharing a tidbit may seem inconsequential, but remember, personal details such as your birthday or the city you were born in are just the sorts of facts you should guard carefully, as they are often the answers to your security questions.

Worse yet, should a criminal get hold of your birthdate and the city you were born in, suddenly it becomes easier to guess your Social Security number. In 2011, the Social Security Administration began randomizing newly assigned Social Security numbers. But before that, people's Social Security numbers were determined by the place and time they were born, so those are important clues to keep from identity thieves.

CONCERNS ABOUT ONLINE privacy aren't just concerns about privacy on the Internet, they're about privacy in every facet of our lives.

All of this is a lot to fully comprehend. But knowing the scale of the problem and taking these very doable steps is a good start. R

◆ ◆ ◆

### A Bug's Life (and Death)

The white marble tomb of Giuliano de'Medici in Florence, Italy, had gotten progressively darker and dirtier over the last 600 years, in part because cleaning it was a tricky business. After all, inside lies the body of a duke. On top sits a major sculpture by Michelangelo called *Night and Day*. But a team of biologists and art historians have discovered a surprising cleaning agent: bacteria. It turns out that a bacterium named *Serratia ficaria* SH7 loves to eat the soot and other material (including the remains that have seeped out of Giuliano's tomb).

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Alex Green*

TRAVEL

# My Most Unforgettable Road Trip

*There's lots to remember while driving cross-country: Buckle up, use your blinker, check your mirrors. But the No. 1 rule of the road? As our readers will tell you, have some fun along the way!*

EDITED BY CAROLINE FANNING

## Rear Window Shopping

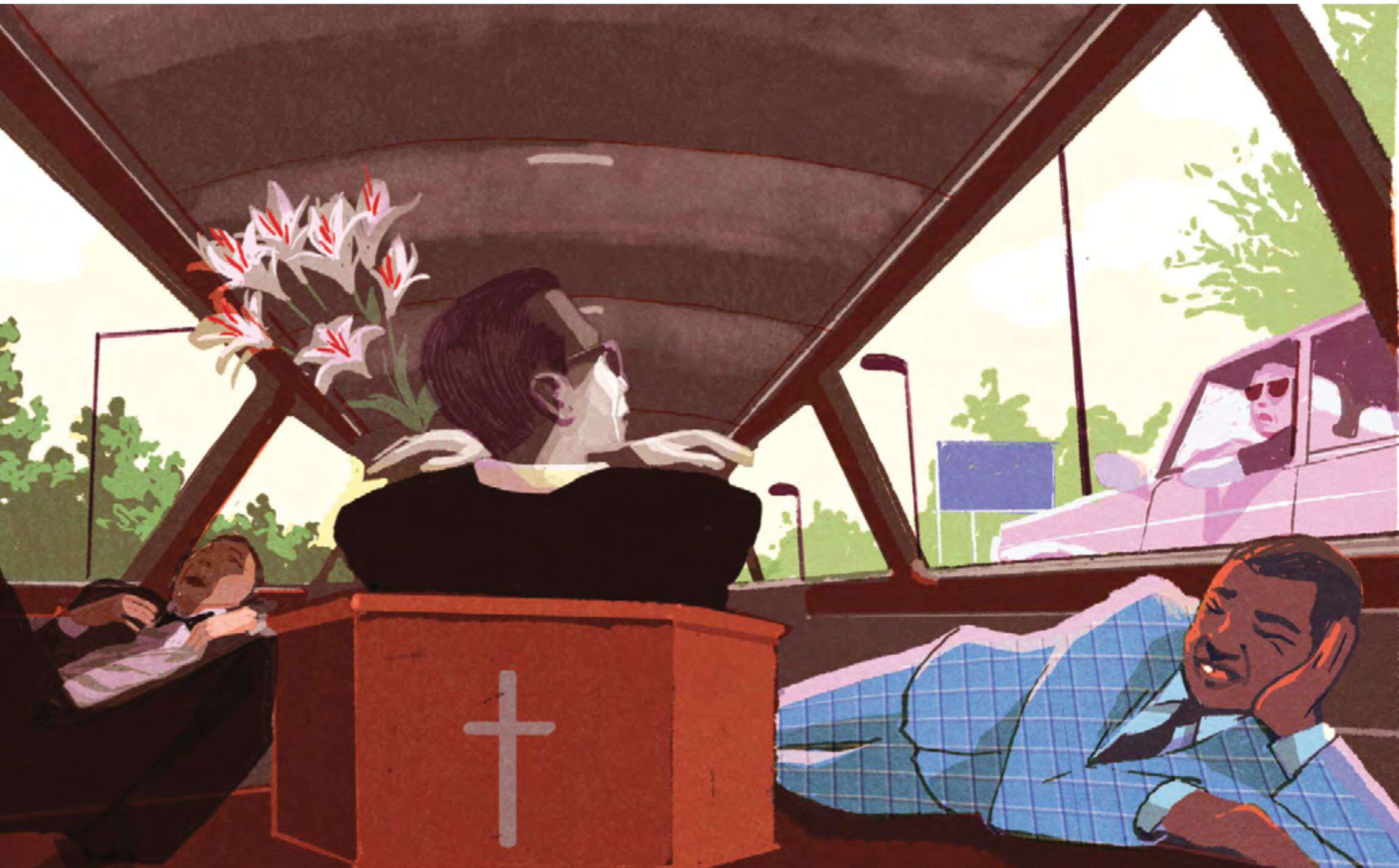
Every spring, my wife, Leah, and I make the three-day pilgrimage to Sanibel Island, Florida, from Grand Rapids, Michigan. My favorite parts of the drive are the farms, the blue sky, and the trees just as they're coming into bloom. For Leah, it's the antique shops. Year after year, if we're within 100 yards of an antique shop, a flea market, or a garage sale, her radar pings, her eyes pop wide, and I hear those dreaded words: "Let's stop for just a minute." On our last trip, she was asleep when I noticed a sign for a flea market, so I sped up, hoping to sneak past. I nearly got away with it. Then a voice from the passenger seat said, "Thought I didn't see that one, didn't you?"

—PAUL BRINKS
*Grand Rapids, Michigan*

## Cashing in a Rain Check

The heat was withering as we drove back to Iowa from camping in Montana. The temperature hit 97 degrees, so we rolled into the Spearfish campground in South Dakota at around 5:30 a.m. to shower. The office was locked, but we figured we could find someone to pay after we used the facilities. But the camp slumbered on.

Back on the farm, our crops suffered from 100-degree temperatures and lack of rain. It seemed every town but ours was getting soaked. But something else weighed on my husband's mind. One morning, I found him writing a check. "I've been feeling guilty about not paying that campground," Larry said. Four dry days crawled by, until a glorious sound shook us awake. It was raining buckets! I said,



"Honey, I think your check just got to Spearfish campground."

—PATRICIA OLSON
*Port Charlotte, Florida*

## Snap Judgment

We were nearing the end of our 40-day Route 66 road trip when my wife and I arrived at Cool Springs, a historic gas station/museum/gift shop in western Arizona. Numbed by having stopped at every attraction along the way, and having already snapped 1,500 photos, we asked ourselves, "Do we really want another stop?" We decided to pause long enough for one more picture. Ginny rolled down her window and stuck out her camera. Just as she was about to press the shutter, the proprietor sitting on the porch piped up and said, "The picture doesn't count unless you get out of the car."

—JON OSHEL
*Hillsboro, Oregon*

## A Ride to Die For

Here was the challenge: Get myself and my groomsmen from Indiana, where we went to school, to California, where I was getting married, and do it on the cheap. We heard about a company that recruited drivers to transport vehicles across the country, so we signed up. It was a great deal—we wouldn't pay a cent—and our vehicle was as stately as they come: a big black hearse. It was spooky at first, but by Nebraska, we decided to have a little fun. Any time a car passed us, Al, lying in the back where the coffin should be, would slowly rise, like Dracula come to life. Driving across country can be tedious, but the hours flew by as we enjoyed the shocked stares and double takes of our fellow travelers.

—RUSSELL KASPAR
*Frankfort, Indiana*

## A Monumental Request Met

Our family took a road trip from Florida to Wyoming. My fondest memory was Mount Rushmore, though it wasn't the monument that clutched at my heart, magnificent as it is. It was a family pushing a gurney with a man on it, searching for the perfect viewing spot. Seeing the monument, I later learned, would tick off the last item on his bucket list. It was a moving sight, and I'll never forget the family who didn't feel it was too much to honor their loved one's last request.

—CALVIN SNYDER
*Maitland, Florida*

## Just Outside of Somewhere, USA

Driving through South Dakota, I was awestruck by just how much farmland there was—acres upon acres of fields, hay bales, and cows as far as the eye could see. My five-year-old son, Adam, had a slightly different perspective. "Wow," he said, "there sure is a lot of middle-of-nowhere out here."

—MARK DEQUAINE
*De Pere, Wisconsin*

## Thanksgiving on the House

My son and I drove from Pennsylvania to Seattle in late November. Approaching Rawlins, Wyoming, on Thanksgiving Day, we pulled off to eat. Only one place was still open. We were greeted and seated promptly, and the waitress told us "Your food will be out shortly." Without ever seeing a menu, we were soon served a full Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings. When we asked for the check, the owner said that every year the restaurant provides a complimentary Thanksgiving dinner to give back to the community. He wouldn't accept money even from travelers like us just passing through. We left in 14-degree weather with snow blowing sideways, full of gratitude.

—DAVID TODD
*West Pittston, Pennsylvania*

## Bluegrass Blessings

Heading home to Ohio via Kentucky, I was enjoying the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains when a chunk of coal flew from a dump truck into my lane. There was a thump and a pop, and soon I was on the side of the road with a flat. I'd changed tires before, but I was no match for the small jack and "doughnut" in my car. As I stood there on the shoulder cursing my luck, an older gentleman in a pickup pulled up and motioned for me to follow him. Now, some might be leery of a stranger in that situation, but I didn't have much choice. I followed him to his house, where I met his lovely wife. As he wrestled with my tire outside, she poured some lemonade and we sat in the kitchen chatting and laughing.

Their kindness didn't end there. Since my spare was good only for short hauls, the man had me follow him to a local mechanic. Ignoring the heat, the two quickly put on a new tire, and, after paying a reasonable price, I was back on the road.

Sadly, I never learned any of their names or even what town I was in. But U.S. Route 23 in north central Kentucky has a special place in my heart. Not just for its beauty, but because of the people who live along it.

—MARILYN WEILER
*Mount Gilead, Ohio*

## Up and Atom

I was nine years old in the summer of 1945, and my father had been transferred from Los Angeles to New York. As we drove across the country in Dad's 1941 Oldsmobile, we'd wake up early each day to beat the heat. One morning, on Route 66 somewhere between Gallup and Albuquerque, New Mexico, at 5:29 a.m., the sky was lit up by a huge bright glow. We were awed and confused. What on earth was that? We later learned that strange light emanated from the explosion of the first atom bomb tested at the Trinity Bomb Site near Alamogordo, New Mexico.

—CHARLES CHAMBERS
*Shelton, Washington*

GERALD HERBERT/SHUTTERSTOCK

DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

# NIGHT TERROR

*In the middle of the night, as most of the tenants slept, much of a 12-story Florida condominium collapsed, killing scores and sending survivors fleeing for their lives. But amid the rubble and dust, heroes appeared as neighbor reached out to neighbor.*

BY *Kelli Kennedy*

FROM **ASSOCIATED PRESS**

MINT IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

Alfredo Lopez and his wife, Marian, were asleep when the first thundering blast jolted them awake at 1:14 a.m. on Thursday, June 24. Moments later, a second boom, much louder than the first, shook the bed on the sixth floor of their Surfside, Florida, apartment.

Alfredo rushed to wake his 24-year-old son, Michael, urging him to get dressed, before running to the balcony window. "All I could see was just white dust, very thick. I could barely see the balcony railing," he says.

The lights cut out and the emergency alarm came on, warning the residents of the Champlain Towers South to evacuate. Alfredo thought about putting on sneakers, but his hands were shaking so badly he knew he couldn't tie the laces. So he settled on sandals with straps.

Marian was disoriented. The 67-year-old fumbled for shoes as her husband pressed her impatiently. She put on a handy pair of slippers instead.

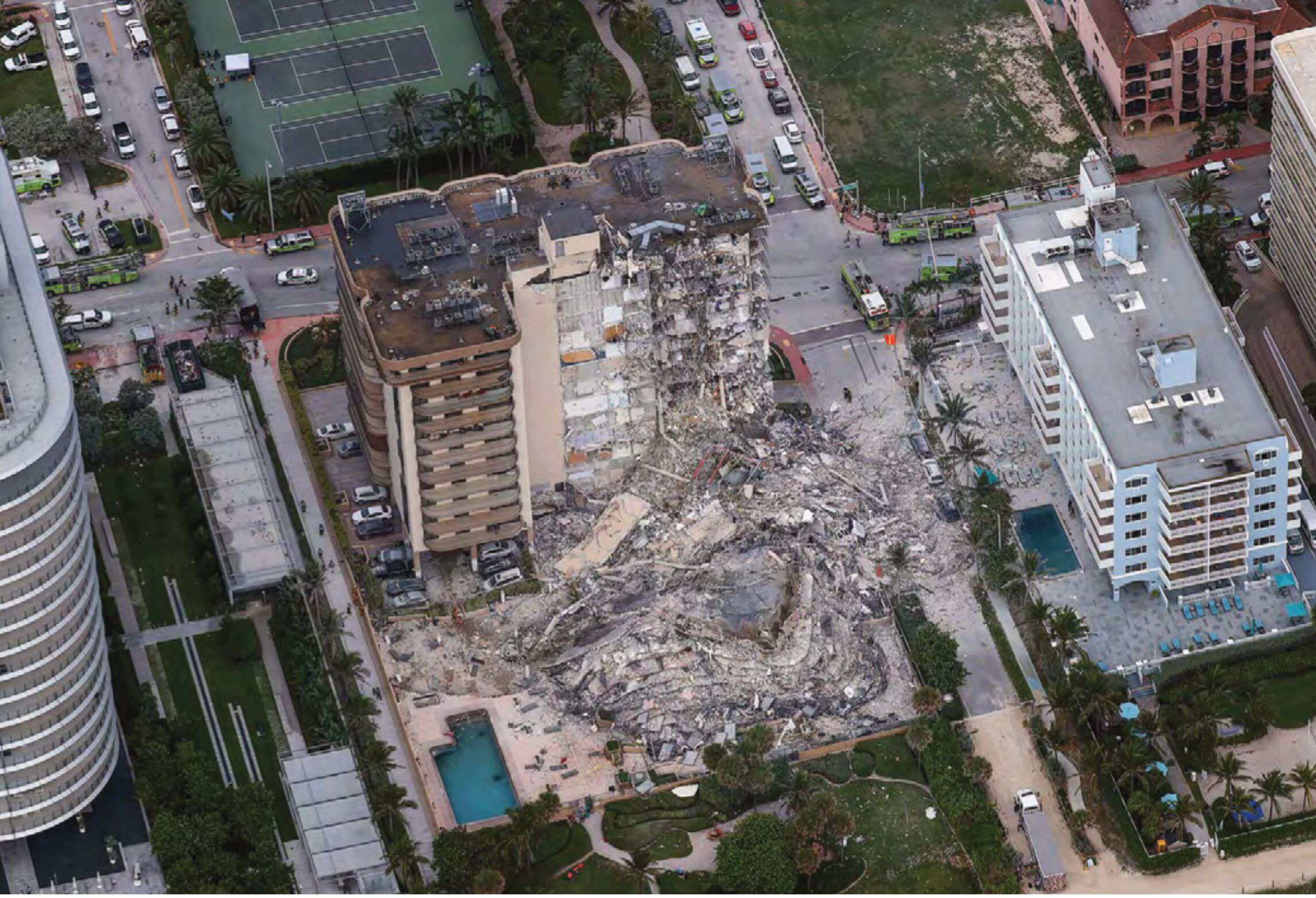
The Lopez family had lived for two decades on the street side of the condo building. Alfredo used to joke to his wife that she'd have to bury him there. That prediction almost came to pass. When he opened the front door to the hallway that night, half the building was gone. A jagged five-foot chunk of flooring barely left enough room to escape.

"There was no hallway, no ceiling, no apartments, no walls—nothing," he says. In fact, he was staring at the moonlit ocean. Roughly half of the apartments in the 12-story, 136-unit complex had collapsed, pancaking one residence on top of another.

Anyone looking at the building from the vantage point of the beach would see entire rooms exposed, as the *Washington Post* described it, "like stage sets before an audience—bunk beds here, a couch there, a washing machine hanging from a ledge, mattresses stacked against a wall."

Alfredo, 61, stood in his apartment's threshold frozen in terror, unable to move. "I was petrified. I really thought, This is it. We are going to die."

SOMETIMES, THE LINE between life and death is as seemingly random as an ocean or street view, an odd or even unit. While 98 residents died, most of the casualties lived in the units facing the ocean. Those facing the street managed to escape, albeit barely. With the elevator collapsed, the survivors descended the cracked stairwell that had separated from the wall. Along the way they helped neighbors they met for the first time and others they'd known for years, all "joined through this tragedy for forever now," says Albert Aguero, who helped an 88-year-old stranger to safety.



**At the time the collapse occurred, the Champlain Towers condo board had put out a call for bids to address structural issues revealed in an engineer's report.**

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

While their escape felt agonizingly long, it all unfolded in mere minutes. In those perilous seconds, before the world knew of the carnage, they were fighting to survive.

"When I opened the staircase door and half the staircase was missing—at that point I knew we were racing against time to all get out as a family," Albert says.

DOWN ON THE first floor, in unit 111, a two-bedroom oceanfront apartment, recent college graduate Gabriel Nir had just finished a late-night workout and was in the kitchen cooking salmon. The rest of the family would normally be asleep, but his 15-year-old sister, Chani, had returned from babysitting only minutes earlier and was in the shower, his dad was out of town, and his mom had just come home from an event.

They all heard the first thunderous rumble. They knew the building was undergoing construction and had been irritated by the incessant noise, but this felt different.

Sara Nir, their mother, ran to the lobby, asking the security guard what had happened. The guard was as clueless as she was. Neither of them knew that the pool deck had collapsed into the garage below.

Back in the Nirs' kitchen, thick concrete dust came rushing into their apartment from the patio windows near the pool. The ground was shaking as 25-year-old Gabriel ran to the bathroom.

"We have to go now!" he screamed to his sister. He grabbed his phone, then he and Chani—wearing only a bathrobe, flip-flops, and a towel wrapped around her hair—fled their apartment and ran to the lobby.

Through the lobby's windows and glass doors, the Nirs could see the damage outside. The car deck had caved into the parking garage. Car alarms were blaring, emergency lights were flashing, and water was rapidly filling the garage where pipes had burst. Residents from upstairs were

## A DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN?

The Champlain Towers South had many desirable features: It was on the ocean, it had a pool and a gym, and it was just north of trendy Miami Beach. "I was telling my mom how this place is great, the house is great, everything is great," Gabriel Nir, who lived on the first floor, told the *Washington Post*. "But when you live there, you start to notice the small creaks and the small issues the building had."

While no definitive cause had been determined for the 40-year-old tower's collapse when we went to press, there were warning signs. The *New York Times* reported that in 2018, "a consultant found evidence of 'major structural damage' to the concrete slab below the pool deck and 'abundant' cracking and crumbling of the columns, beams and walls of the parking garage," which was located beneath the pool area. It was the pool area that collapsed into the garage, possibly adding to or setting off the collapse. The *Times* also reports that "damaged columns at the building's base may have had less steel reinforcement than was originally planned."

Additionally, a 2020 Florida International University study found that the land on which the building stood had been sinking about 2 millimeters a year in the 1990s, although the rate may have changed since then. While the sinking land may have contributed to the building's collapse, FIU Institute of Environment professor Shimon Wdowinski doubts it alone would have brought down the building.

If the Champlain Towers seems to have been a disaster waiting to happen, here is a silver lining: It could have been worse. Tourists and snowbirds tend to avoid Florida's hot, humid summers, and many of the apartments had been shuttered until winter. Had the collapse occurred a few months earlier, there likely would have been more casualties.

—THE EDITORS

running out the door screaming, many still in pajamas, one man pushing a baby stroller.

As the rumbling intensified, Gabriel pushed his mom and sister safely into the street. "Run! Run!" he ordered. Tiny rocks and bits of debris pelted his head as he turned back to face an image that still haunts him.

"I saw the building turning into a white dust," he says, describing the complex as part of it crumbled, much of it atop his family's apartment. "I heard people screaming."

"I have to go back. I have to make sure everyone's OK," he yelled to his mother and sister. But he knew it was too late.

UP ON THE 11th floor, Albert Aguero stared in disbelief at the gaping holes in the elevator shaft. Half of the neighboring apartment was sheared off. The power was out. He wondered whether lightning had struck. The fit 42-year-old former college athlete was vacationing from New Jersey with his wife, Janette; 14-year-old daughter, Athena; and 22-year-old son, Justin Willis, a college baseball player.

Justin thought a plane had crashed into the building, but there was little time to talk as they rushed into the stairwell, wondering if they could manage to painstakingly descend 11 floors before more of the building collapsed. No one panicked or cried. "There was no time to react. Just make your move," Albert says.

Each time they descended another level, they yelled out the floor number, a small victory of survival, one floor closer to freedom. The swirling dust and ash made it difficult to see a few feet in any direction. To make sure they hadn't lost anyone, they frequently called out each other's names.

"Justin, are you still there?" "Babe, are you OK?"

At the sixth-floor landing, they ran into the Lopezes, and the two families proceeded down together. When they reached the fifth floor, Janette heard banging coming from the other side of the stairwell door. The

LYNNE SLADKY/SHUTTERSTOCK

**Some residents carried neighbors down the stairs.**

**Only one survivor was pulled from the rubble: a 15-year-old boy who had called out to a passerby.**

WILFREDO LEE/SHUTTERSTOCK

rocking of the building had warped the door frame, which in turn jammed the door shut. Using all her strength, Janette wrenched it open, and a few more refugees joined them on the stairs. Included in the group was 62-year-old Susana Alvarez, who was clutching Esther Gorfinkel, one of the building's original tenants.

Alvarez asked Albert and his son to help Gorfinkel as they continued their descent. There were some cracks and gaps down the stairwell, but nothing impassable. Still, the pace was too much for the elderly woman.

"Don't worry about me. I'm 88. I've had a good life," Gorfinkel said, trying to wave them on without her.

But Albert was determined they were all going to make it out alive. They moved carefully and quickly—no pushing or trampling. "You're going to be fine," he reassured her. "We're going to make sure you make it to 89."

ON THE NINTH floor, Raysa Rodriguez and her neighbor Yadira Santos huddled in the hallway, along with Santos' 10-year-old son, Kai, and their Maltese puppy. They knew the other half of the building was gone and assumed the stairwells were too.

Rodriguez thought their only chance of escape was to wait on a balcony until fire trucks arrived. In the chaos, her brother Fred called. He had rushed to the building and was standing outside. He kept repeating the same urgent warning: "Get out of there! Get out!" She argued, saying there was no way out—the stairs were gone.

A firefighter grabbed Fred's phone and uttered a chilling command: "You need to find a way out."

They decided to try the stairwell again. When they reached the eighth floor, they found 84-year-old Ada Lopez waiting with her walker. Santos had called to warn her. Rodriguez rushed ahead to see if there was a way out as the others helped Ada down the stairwell, bumping into the Aguero and Lopez clans along the way.

But when Rodriguez reached the flooded parking garage, she turned around. “I knew being electrocuted was a real possibility,” she says.

Rodriguez rushed back upstairs to her party. While the Aguero and Lopez group continued down to the garage, Rodriguez chose a different path, leading her friends out of the stairwell at the second floor. There, they discovered that someone had left their apartment door open. They ran to the balcony, which faced the street side, and called down to a rescue team outside. Soon, first responders maneuvered a cherry picker toward them. One by one they stepped in and were brought down to the street and to safety.

BACK IN THE stairwell, the Aguero and Lopez families were still making their way toward the garage. Alfredo Lopez was panicked … and miffed. Why was his wife wearing slippers to navigate their doomsday nightmare? “What were you thinking?” he yelled.

As they descended, Susana Alvarez paused as she remembered Hilda Noriega on the sixth floor. She was like family; they’d spent many holidays together. Noriega and Alvarez’s mother had been best friends since their days in Cuba. Can I rescue her? Can I go get her? she thought frantically. But she knew the wing of the building Noriega lived in was gone. “So I kept going,” she says.

Meanwhile, Esther Gorfinkel was flagging. They were moving too fast, she complained. Her knee was in terrible pain. Without thinking, Alfredo threw her over his shoulder and pressed on.

“We became like a caravan,” he says.

But the caravan was in for a surprise when they reached the flooded garage. Though they weren’t worried about being electrocuted, as Rodriguez had feared, their way out was obstructed by mangled cars and a giant slab of concrete that had fallen from the pool deck above. They would have to wade through the water and scramble over the vehicles and concrete to the pool deck.

Alvarez panicked. She was wearing slippers, just like Alfredo’s wife, Marian. It was too high to climb the rubble. She watched as the athletic Aguero family ascended the broken cars and concrete to the pool deck, with father and son hoisting Gorfinkel up the wreckage.

I can’t make it, Alvarez thought. Her hands were covered with blood, but she had no scratches, and no idea where it came from. But the Lopezes weren’t about to leave her behind.

“Thanks to Alfredo and his son,” she says, “we were able to climb up and get out.”

THE AGUERO, NIR, and Lopez families and their little ragtag team all came out alive and safe. They now find

**Gabriel Nir, left, and his family escaped, but their first-floor apartment was squashed under debris. At right, loved ones set up a tribute wall to the victims.**

themselves embracing their children and siblings tighter, knowing that many of their neighbors will never return, never hug loved ones again.

They lost their homes. It's all gone. Clothes, computers, cars, even prescriptions. The part of the building that continued to stand was deemed structurally unsound and unsafe for tenants to return. It was demolished on July 4. It's inconvenient, the survivors say, but it doesn't really matter. They are alive. At night, it's much harder. They still hear the screams in their heads, and it all comes rushing back. "I had horrible survivor's guilt," says Alfredo.

Days after the collapse of the Champlain Towers South, the Nir family found themselves crammed into a nearby donated hotel room. But Gabriel Nir found it difficult to sleep. He tried to stay busy, to push away the what-ifs. "It's like a virus. It just never goes away," he says regretfully. "I wish I could have done more … these people who are missing, they aren't coming back."

Susana Alvarez is also filled with grief. Hilda Noriega, her mother's best friend, is among the dead. And then there are her other neighbors. "Those are people I say hello to," she told NPR. "The lady who was in the elevator with me that night before when I went home for the evening—we were talking. She did yoga with me. They were the nicest couple. They always wanted me to go out, ride bikes with them."

And then there were the people she heard crying from the rubble as she escaped. "Some were yelling 'Help,'" she says. "That will haunt me forever." R

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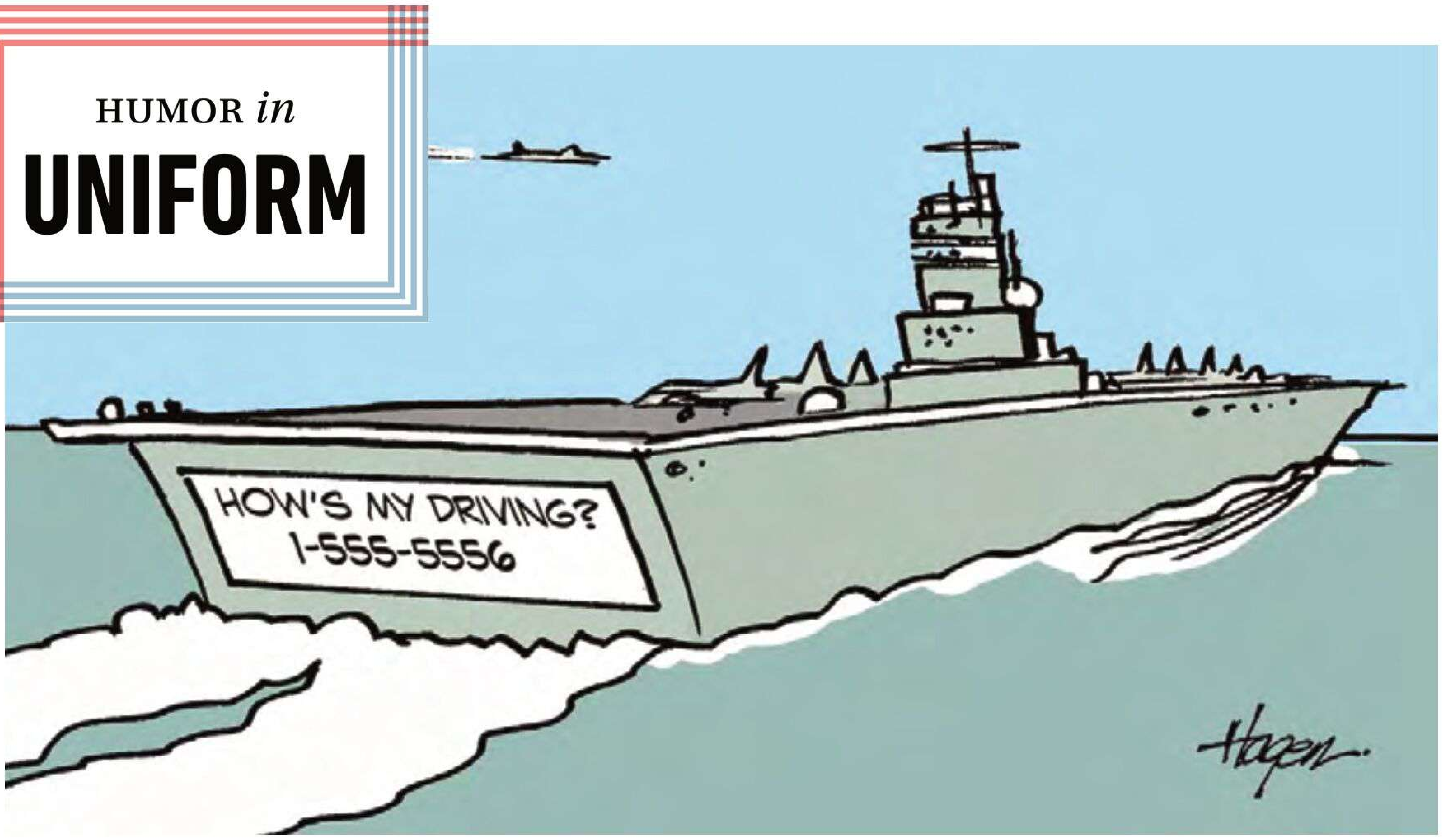
GERALD HERBERT/SHUTTERSTOCK (2)

# HUMOR *in* UNIFORM



RALPH HAGEN/CARTOONSTOCK.COM

**My buddy** and I—two freshly minted second lieutenants—were invited to dine with the base commander and his wife at their home. We agreed that before dinner my friend would stop by the PX to pick up a nice box of candy for our hostess and that we'd split the cost.

The next day, as we walked to the colonel's home in our Army dress uniforms, I asked what he'd bought. I was anticipating a box of truffles or assorted chocolates. Instead, he'd bought his personal favorite.

"Reese's Peanut Butter Cups!" he said, beaming. "You owe me 88 cents."

—JR PAWLOWSKI
*Stevens Point, Wisconsin*

**A month into** my stint in the Army, I was assigned to guard prisoners. The fact that I was very raw was made abundantly clear to me the first time I accompanied an inmate to the military prison. After we walked side by side for a few feet, the prisoner, who had a few years on me, pointed to my weapon and said, "You know, you should really walk behind me and have your rifle ready to fire in case I try to escape."

—HOWARD HEIN
*Briarcliff Manor, New York*

**YOUR FUNNY MILITARY** *story could be worth $$$. For details, see page 2 or go to* **RD.COM/SUBMIT.**

# How I Learned to Make Friends Again

*It used to be so easy. Then life got in the way.*

BY *Billy Baker*

FROM THE BOOK **WE NEED TO HANG OUT**

KEVIN ERDVIG/UNSPLASH

LET’S START WITH the moment I realized I was already a loser.

I had been summoned to an editor’s office at the *Boston Globe*. “We want you to write about how middle-aged men have no friends,” he said. There was a crisis in modern friendship, he went on to say, and it was having a catastrophic effect on mental and physical health.

*I have plenty of friends, buddy. Are you calling me a loser? You are.*

*Also, did you just call me middle-aged?*

As I slunk back to my desk, I ran a quick mental roll call just to confirm that I was not, in fact, perfect for this loneliness story. First off, there was my buddy Mark. We went to high school together and we still talked all the time and we hung out all the …

*Wait, how often did we actually hang out? Maybe four or five times a year? Maybe less?*

Then there was my other best friend from high school, Rory … I genuinely could not remember the last time I’d seen Rory. Had it been a year? Entirely possible.

I had a wife and two young boys, and we had recently purchased a home in a small coastal town about an hour north of the city. Aside from work, most everything revolved around my children. When you added it all up, there was no real “friend time” left.

My story was very typical. And very dangerous. That’s what I heard from Richard Schwartz, a psychiatrist and local Boston guy who, with his wife, Jacqueline Olds, MD, had written a book called *The Lonely American: Drifting Apart in the Twenty-first Century*.

Name a health condition you don't want and there's a study linking it to loneliness. Diabetes. Obesity. Alzheimer's. Heart disease. Cancer.

Now consider that a 2019 survey found that 61 percent of Americans—men and women—are measurably lonely, based on how they scored on the UCLA Loneliness scale, the gold standard for decades. The percentage had jumped seven points from just the previous year. And according to a large study conducted by the AARP, more than 42 million Americans over the age of 45 suffer from chronic loneliness.

"Psychiatry has worked hard to destigmatize things like depression, and to a large part it has been successful," Dr. Schwartz said. "People are comfortable saying they're depressed. But they're not comfortable saying they're lonely, because you're the kid sitting alone in the cafeteria."

I've never been that kid. I'm gregarious and outgoing. I've never had trouble making friends. I'm fairly good about keeping in touch. Or at least I comment on their Facebook posts, and they comment on mine.

But I could no longer deny how well my symptoms fit the diagnosis that had been handed to me. I had to admit that I had no truly active friendships. So I typed out my complaints, threw in some research, and completed my assignment.

As soon as my article was published, the first thing I did was send it to Mark and Rory, my buddies from high school.

Mark replied right away. "Who is this?" That's classic Mark.

Rory's reply was not funny. "Awesome story," he wrote. And then he apologized, because he had failed to mention something kind of important. He had moved.

To Vienna.

One of my two best friends had moved to Austria and did not bother to tell me.

It was clear I needed to get my friend life back on track. And I wasn't the only one. I was getting e-mails, hundreds and hundreds of e-mails, all saying "This is me," or some version of it.

Good thing I had spoken to some experts about all this.

Dr. Schwartz had suggested finding activities with built-in regularity, and I did not need a PhD to understand why this is the favored advice of the experts who work in this field. Scheduling takes initiative, and if you have to take initiative every time you see a friend, it's easy for the effort to feel like yet another aggravation you don't need. Anyone who has ever been on an e-mail chain trying to plan a group get-together knows how quickly the aggravation can kill the concept.

SIDNEY PEARCE/UNSPLASH

So the expert recommendation is rather grandfatherly: Join a bowling league. Essentially. That gave me an idea. More accurately, I was going to steal an idea.

Shortly after we'd moved from the city, I took a kayaking class run out of a small shop owned by a guy named Ozzie and his wife, Sandy. At some point I heard Ozzie decline an invitation because he had Wednesday Night. I didn't totally follow, as I was under the impression that we all had Wednesday night, but Ozzie explained that "Wednesday Night" was a pact that he and some buddies had made years before, a standing order that on Wednesday nights they would get together and do something. Anything.

Everything about the idea sounded perfect to me, a blend of quaint and profound, right down to its name, which is a lack of a name, which is a very guy thing to do. Also ... Wednesdays. Ain't nothing great about Wednesdays.

I needed my own Wednesday Nights. And I knew that other guys did too.

So I invited a dozen guys to get together on Wednesday night, in the loft of a barn a guy in town had agreed to let us use. The barn wasn't much. It had a couple of old couches, some beat-up chairs, a strand of Christmas lights on the wall. It was perfect.

Ten guys showed up. I told them the barn was ours on the odd-numbered Wednesdays, and if anyone wanted to join me, I'd be there. When the next Odd Wednesday rolled around, the Boston Bruins were playing in the Stanley Cup, so the guys who were free that night got together and watched the game. Friendship is complicated unless it's painfully simple.

As the weather warmed, we moved outside, where we set up a firepit on a spot overlooking a river that runs through a salt marsh. There was a primitive pleasure in sitting around a fire at the end of a day, cold drink in hand. We had some good laughs, but what I remember most about that night was that near the end, when it had finally become pitch-black, there was a good long stretch where we all just stood around the flames, watching them dance, and saying nothing.

As the year rolled on, we got together some Odd Wednesdays and skipped others.

Then the coronavirus arrived.

When the world was quickly forced into isolation, it came with forced loneliness. What was special about it was that we were all going through it together, acutely aware of it, and willing to talk about it because that's really all there was to talk about. Instead of the philosophical question of "*Why* aren't we hanging out?" we were all faced with the concrete question of "*When* can we hang out?"

SUDDENLY I WAS IN A TEXT CHAIN WITH EVERY SQUAD I'D EVER BEEN A MEMBER OF.

As much of the world went into lockdown, two health crises arrived simultaneously: the virus and the loneliness born of the isolation it forced upon everyone as we fought to stop the spread. But from that dark void, an unmistakable trend emerged. Suddenly, I found myself in a group text chain with every squad I'd ever been a member of. High school friends. College buddies. My crew from journalism school. My brother and cousins. My friends from the gym. A crew I'd played bar trivia with a decade before. Organically and instinctively, the squads were assembling.

"What catastrophes seem to do—sometimes in the span of a few minutes—is turn back the clock on 10,000 years of social evolution," Sebastian Junger wrote in his wonderful book *Tribe*. "There is no survival outside group survival, and that creates a social bond that people sorely miss."

I've come to subscribe to the increasingly popular belief that much of our modern angst, anxiety, and disconnect can be traced to our abandonment of the tribal living we were built for. And in the strangest way—digitally, in physical isolation—we were demonstrating, more clearly than ever, the desire for a return.

As the lockdown gradually lifted and life inched back toward some sense of normalcy, we held our first new Wednesday Night. This time I didn't try to gather the whole group. I limited it to three of the guys: Kevin, Jon, and Andy. We had been in contact nearly every day, even as the larger Wednesday Night group went on a COVID hold. Kevin had been kind enough to buy us a boat, so we made that our thing.

Going forward, I'm not sure what will become of the Odd Wednesdays. I still love all those guys, and I sincerely hope we will be able to pull off a gathering here and there for all eternity. But even if my grand experiment didn't work out, I still made out: I wound up with three best friends to hang out with on Wednesday nights.

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KEVIN ERDVIG/UNSPLASH

# BRAIN GAMES

*7 Pages* TO SHARPEN *Your Mind*

## Fact or Fiction?

**MEDIUM** Determine whether each statement is fact or fiction. To reveal the solution to the bonus question at the bottom, write the letters indicated by your responses in the corresponding numbered blanks. Turn the page upside down for the answers.

**1.** The Spanish national anthem has no lyrics.

**FACT: I** **FICTION: D**

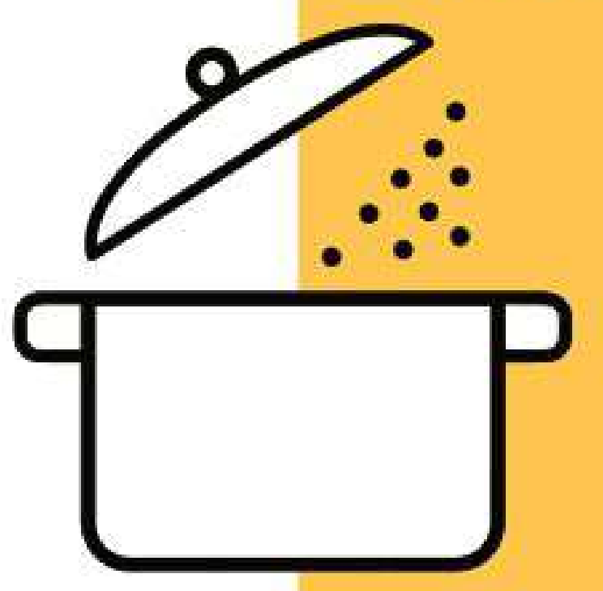
**2.** The Great Wall of China is visible from space.

**FACT: O** **FICTION: P**

**3.** Voltaire reportedly drank 40 to 50 cups of coffee a day.

**FACT: A** **FICTION: M**

**4.** Adding salt to water makes it boil faster.

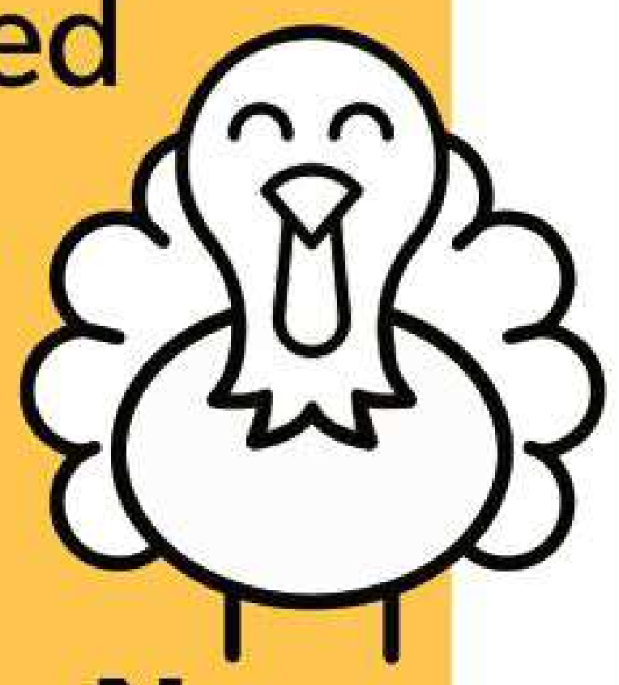


**FACT: A** **FICTION: D**

**5.** Veterans Day has always been in November.

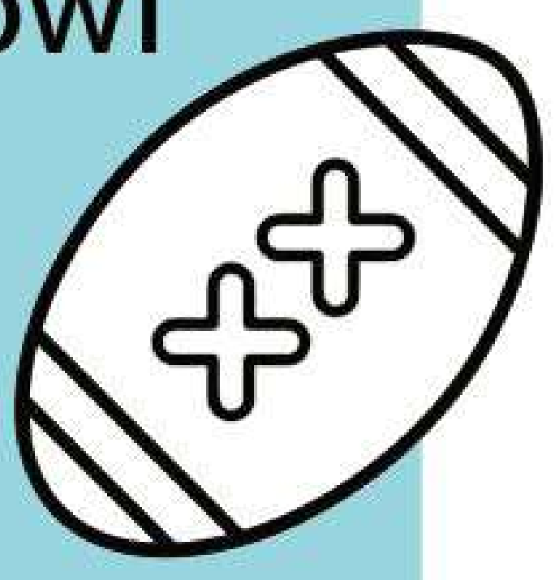
**FACT: I** **FICTION: D**

**6.** A turkey's gender can be determined by its droppings.



**FACT: R** **FICTION: N**

**7.** More people tuned in to the Super Bowl than the Oscars this year.



**FACT: E** **FICTION: U**

**8.** The Islets of Langerhans are found in the South Pacific.

**FACT: R** **FICTION: S**

**9.** Saffron is the most expensive spice.

**FACT: S** **FICTION: L**

**BONUS QUESTION** What is the number that identifies your Internet connection called? (Need help? Turn to "Delete Your Internet Footprint" on page 80.)

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

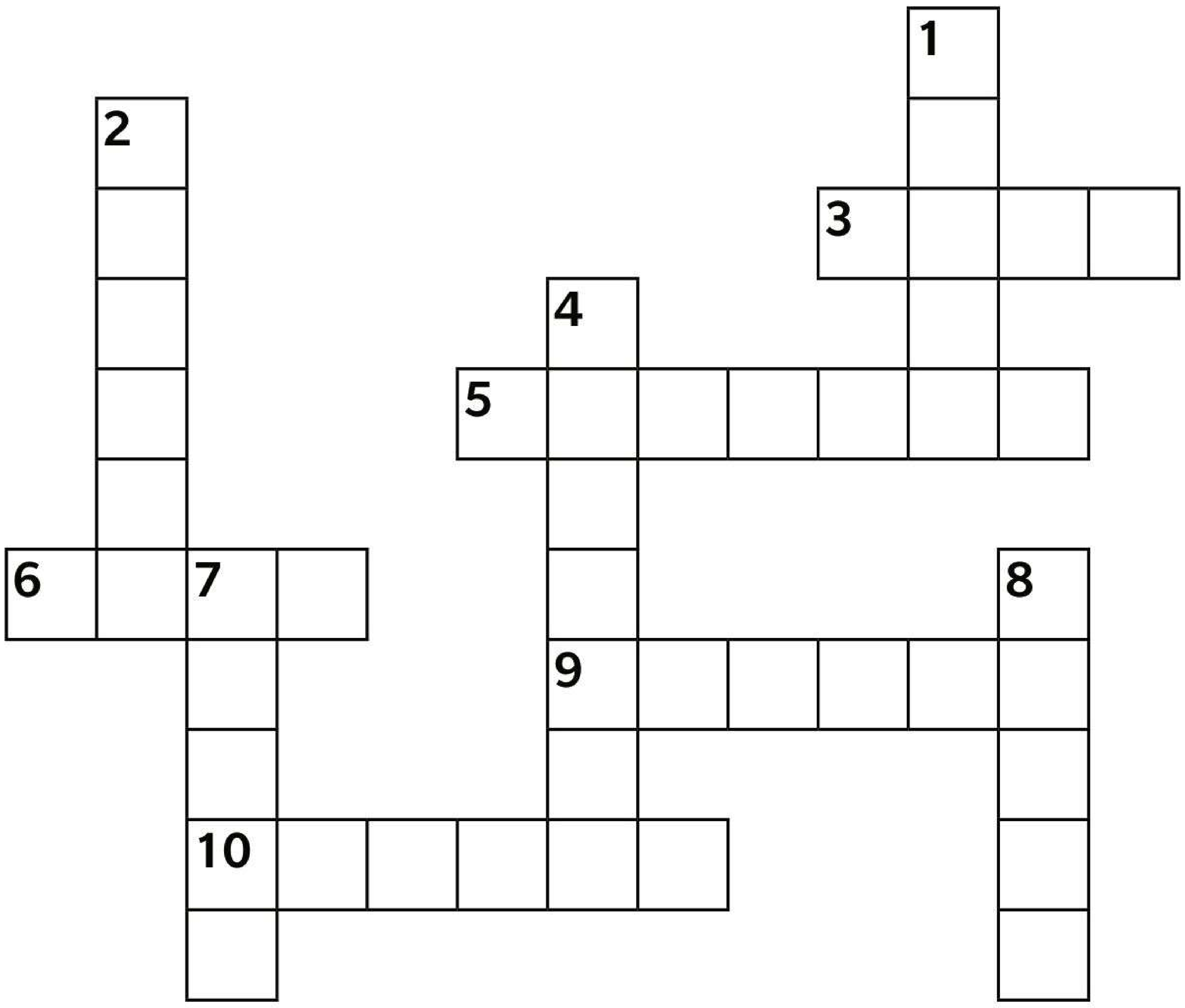
**Answers: 1.** Fact. **2.** Fiction; even in low Earth orbit, it isn't visible to the naked eye. **3.** Fact. **4.** Fiction; adding salt gives water a higher boiling point. **5.** Fiction; for a few years in the 1970s, it was celebrated on the fourth Monday in October. **6.** Fact; the males' droppings are spiral and the females' are J-shaped. **7.** Fact; the Super Bowl had nearly ten times as many viewers. **8.** Fiction; they are cells in the pancreas. **9.** Fact. **Bonus Question.** IP address.

EMILY GOODMAN (FACT OR FICTION). NOUN PROJECT (4)

## Quick Crossword

**EASY** In the spirit of giving thanks, fill the grid with these words, all of which mean "thank you" in various languages.

HVALA (Croatian)
MERCI (French)
WADO (Cherokee)
ASANTE (Swahili)
TODA (Hebrew)
GRACIAS (Spanish)
KIITOS (Finnish)
ARIGATO (Japanese)
DANKE (German)
MAHALO (Hawaiian)



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## Missing Middle

**DIFFICULT** Using the rule that these grids all follow, what number should go in the center square of the fourth grid?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | | 5 |
| | 21 | |
| 4 | | 1 |

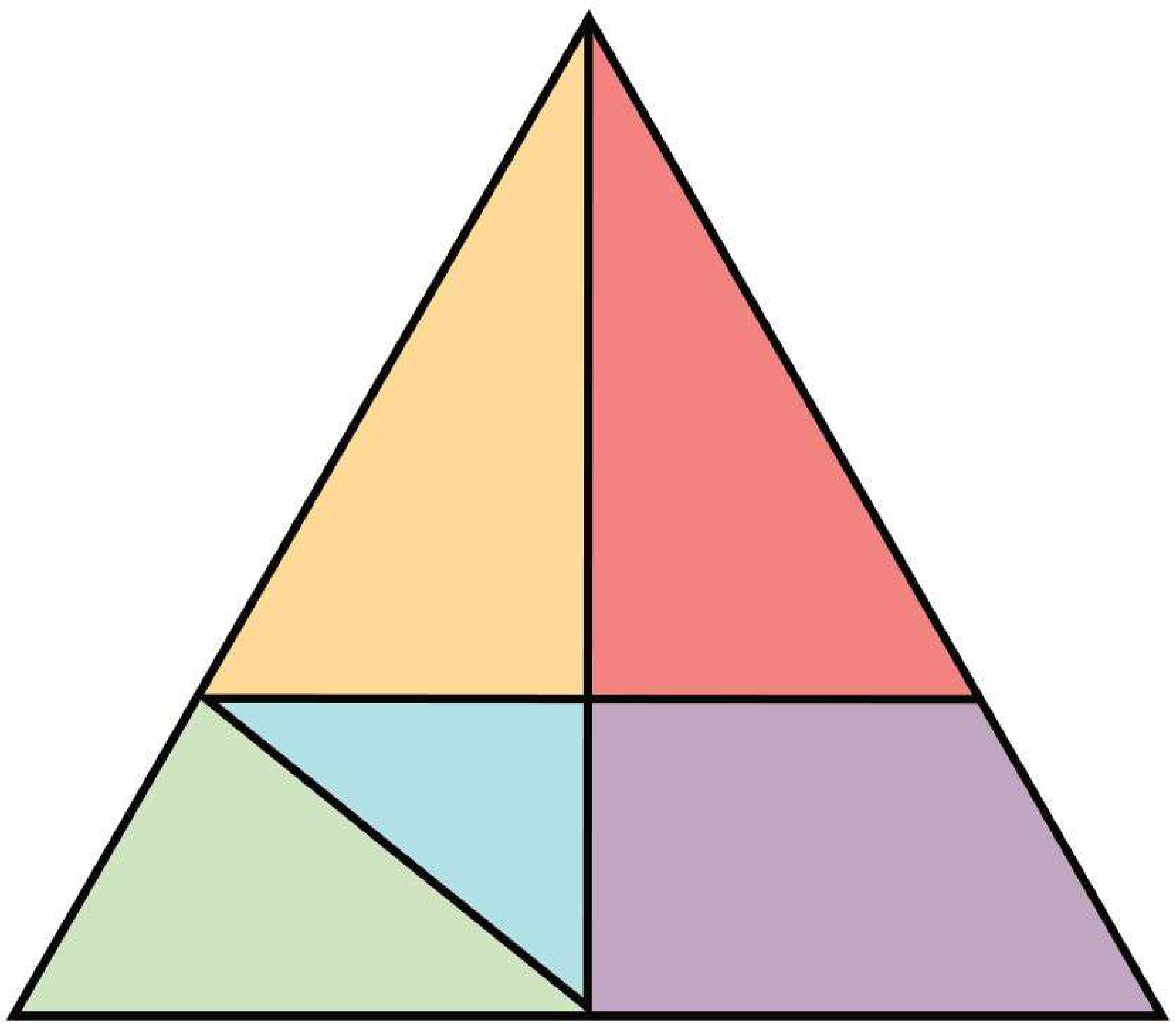
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | | 9 |
| | 72 | |
| 7 | | 3 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | | 2 |
| | 94 | |
| 1 | | 34 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | | 21 |
| | ? | |
| 14 | | 7 |

## Pyramid Scheme

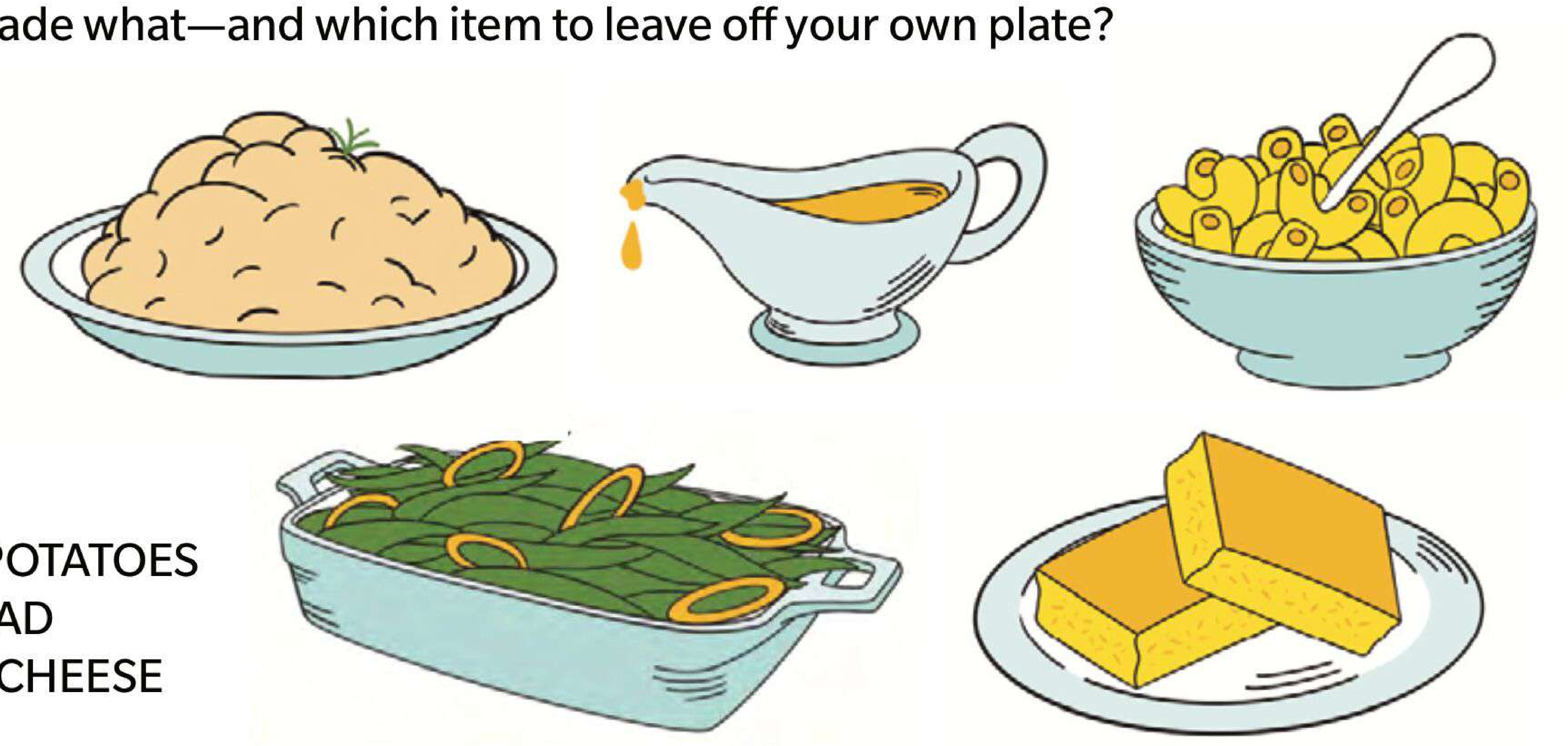
**MEDIUM** In total, how many distinct triangles are in the figure below? Note: Some of the triangles are made up of two or more smaller ones.



EMILY GOODMAN (QUICK CROSSWORD). MARCEL DANESI (MISSING MIDDLE, PYRAMID SCHEME)

## One Too Many Cooks

**EASY** You're about to share a Friendsgiving meal with five of your nearest and dearest. Each friend made a different side. The problem? Larry is a terrible cook, so you don't want to sample his dish. Based on the following clues, can you figure out who made what—and which item to leave off your own plate?



**FRIENDS**

AIDEN
CEDRIC
JILL
BARB
LARRY

**DISHES**

MASHED POTATOES
CORNBREAD
MAC AND CHEESE
GRAVY
GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

**CLUES**

- Aiden did not make a dish with a vegetable in its name.
- Cedric made a side with only one word in its name.
- Jill made the mac and cheese.
- Barb did not make the green bean casserole.

## Double Trouble

**MEDIUM** Rephrase each item below as a pair of rhyming words. Hint: Each item's number is also the number of syllables in each word in the answer.

1. Rosé wine, for one
2. A rowdy group of political allies
3. The cost of cosmetology school
4. A jockey crossing the street
5. A respect for acronyms and other shortenings

*For more Brain Games, go to* **RD.COM/CROSSWORDS.**

*For answers, turn to* **PAGE 119.**

EMILY GOODMAN (DOUBLE TROUBLE, ONE TOO MANY COOKS). SAKKE OVERLUND (5)

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# WORD POWER

**Grab your safety goggles** and fire up your Bunsen burner—we're heading to science class with terms related to chemistry, biology, and physics. If you feel out of your element, don't worry; the words are also used outside the lab. After your pop quiz, take a quantum leap to the next page for answers.

BY *Sarah Chassé*

**1. hypothesis** *n.*
(hi-'pah-thuh-sis)
A published study
B unproven theory
C law of motion

**2. combust** *v.*
(kum-'bust)
A burn
B fuse
C shatter

**3. vacuum** *n.*
('vak-yoom)
A air pump
B unit of measure
C empty space

**4. dilute** *v.*
(di'-loot)
A split in half
B water down
C apply force

**5. crucible** *n.*
('kroo-sih-bull)
A pot for heating
B simple machine
C volcanic rock

**6. evolve** *v.*
(ih-'volv)
A die out
B change gradually
C pass down

**7. nucleus** *n.*
('noo-klee-iss)
A bodily fluid
B observation
C cell part

**8. hybrid** *n.*
('hi-brid)
A clone
B hatchling
C crossbreed

**9. inert** *adj.*
(ih-'nert)
A explosive
B inactive
C poisonous

**10. velocity** *n.*
(vuh-'lah-sih-tee)
A speed
B friction
C pressure

**11. vertebra** *n.*
('ver-tuh-bruh)
A green metal
B back bone
C reptile family

**12. pathogen** *n.*
('path-uh-jen)
A invasive species
B disease's cause
C plant spore

**13. inquiry** *n.*
(in-'kwy-ree)
A reaction
B thesis
C investigation

**14. symbiotic** *adj.*
(sim-bee-'ah-tik)
A oxygen-rich
B interdependent
C evidence-based

**15. variable** *n.*
('vair-ee-uh-bull)
A math equation
B colorless gas
C changeable factor

## Weird Science

Science has countless branches, many with names ending in *-logy* or *-ology*, meaning "study," from the Greek *logos* ("word"). Among the lesser-known specialties: oology (the study of birds' eggs), koniology (dust), dendrochronology (tree rings), and ichnology (fossil footprints). And for those who really want to get down and dirty, there's scatology, the study of ... well, excrement.

---

## Word Power ANSWERS

**1. hypothesis**
(B) *unproven theory*
The professor designed an experiment to test her hypothesis.

**2. combust** (A) *burn*
"Oh no," Raheem cried on Thanksgiving. "Our turkey combusted in the oven!"

**3. vacuum**
(C) *empty space*
Adopting a rescue dog has filled the vacuum in Geena's life.

**4. dilute** (B) *water down*
You should dilute bleach before using it to disinfect surfaces.

**5. crucible**
(A) *pot for heating*
"For this experiment, we'll melt aluminum in a crucible," Ms. Ferris told her students.

**6. evolve**
(B) *change gradually*
Experts believe that some dinosaur species evolved into birds.

**7. nucleus** (C) *cell part*
A cell's nucleus contains its genetic information, or DNA.

**8. hybrid** (C) *crossbreed*
The clementine is a hybrid between the mandarin and the sweet orange.

**9. inert** (B) *inactive*
Medications often include inert ingredients, such as dyes.

**10. velocity** (A) *speed*
As the league's top wide receiver, Carl is known for his velocity and ball handling.

**11. vertebra**
(B) *back bone*
I will never go ice skating again—the last time I went, I fell and cracked a vertebra!

**12. pathogen**
(B) *disease's cause*
Bacteria, fungi, and viruses are all types of pathogens.

**13. inquiry**
(C) *investigation*
"My conclusions are based on scientific inquiry, not on personal opinion," said Dr. Lee.

**14. symbiotic**
(B) *interdependent*
Today's teenagers have a symbiotic relationship with social media.

**15. variable**
(C) *changeable factor*
Meteorologists consider a lot of variables when predicting the weather.

### Vocabulary Ratings

9 & BELOW: lab assistant
10–12: researcher
13–15: rocket scientist

A-S-L/GETTY IMAGES

# ANSWERS

## WHERE, OH WHERE?

*(page 44)*

C. Boone County, Iowa

## BRAIN GAMES

*(pages 114-115)*

### Quick Crossword

| ACROSS | DOWN |
|---|---|
| 3. WADO | 1. HVALA |
| 5. GRACIAS | 2. MAHALO |
| 6. TODA | 4. ARIGATO |
| 9. ASANTE | 7. DANKE |
| 10. KIITOS | 8. MERCI |

### One Too Many Cooks

Aiden made the gravy. Cedric made the cornbread. Jill made the mac and cheese. Barb made the mashed potatoes. Larry made the green bean casserole, so that is the dish you'll want to avoid.

### Pyramid Scheme

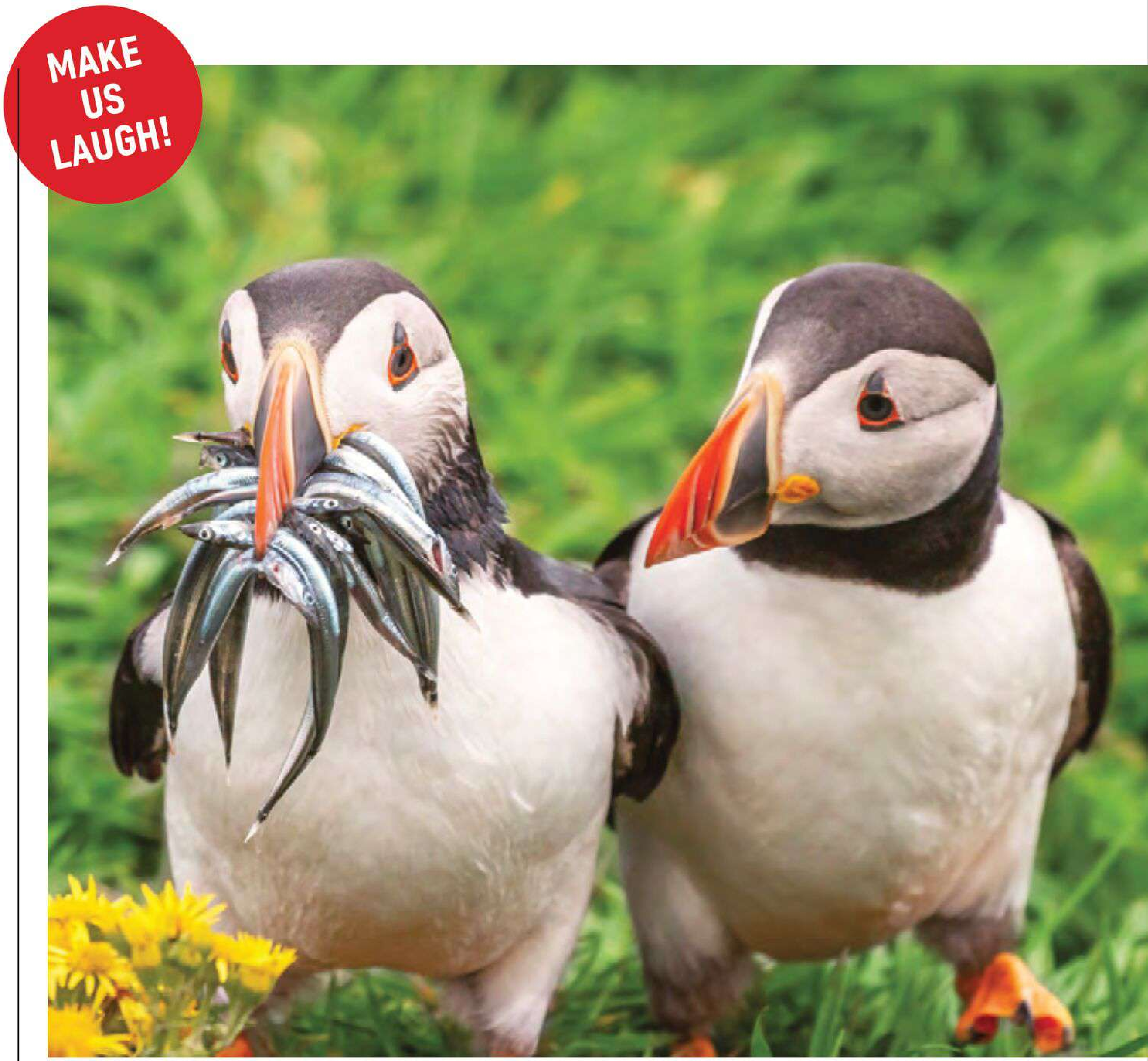
9

### Missing Middle

15. The number in the center square of each grid is found by adding the numbers in the corners, then reversing the digits.

### Double Trouble

Pink drink, raucous caucus, beautician tuition, equestrian pedestrian, abbreviation appreciation



KRISZTINA SCHEEFF/COMEDY WILDLIFE PHOTO AWARDS 2020

### Caption Contest

What's your clever description for this picture? Submit your funniest line at **RD.COM/CAPTIONCONTEST**. Winners will appear in a future Photo Finish (**PAGE 120**).

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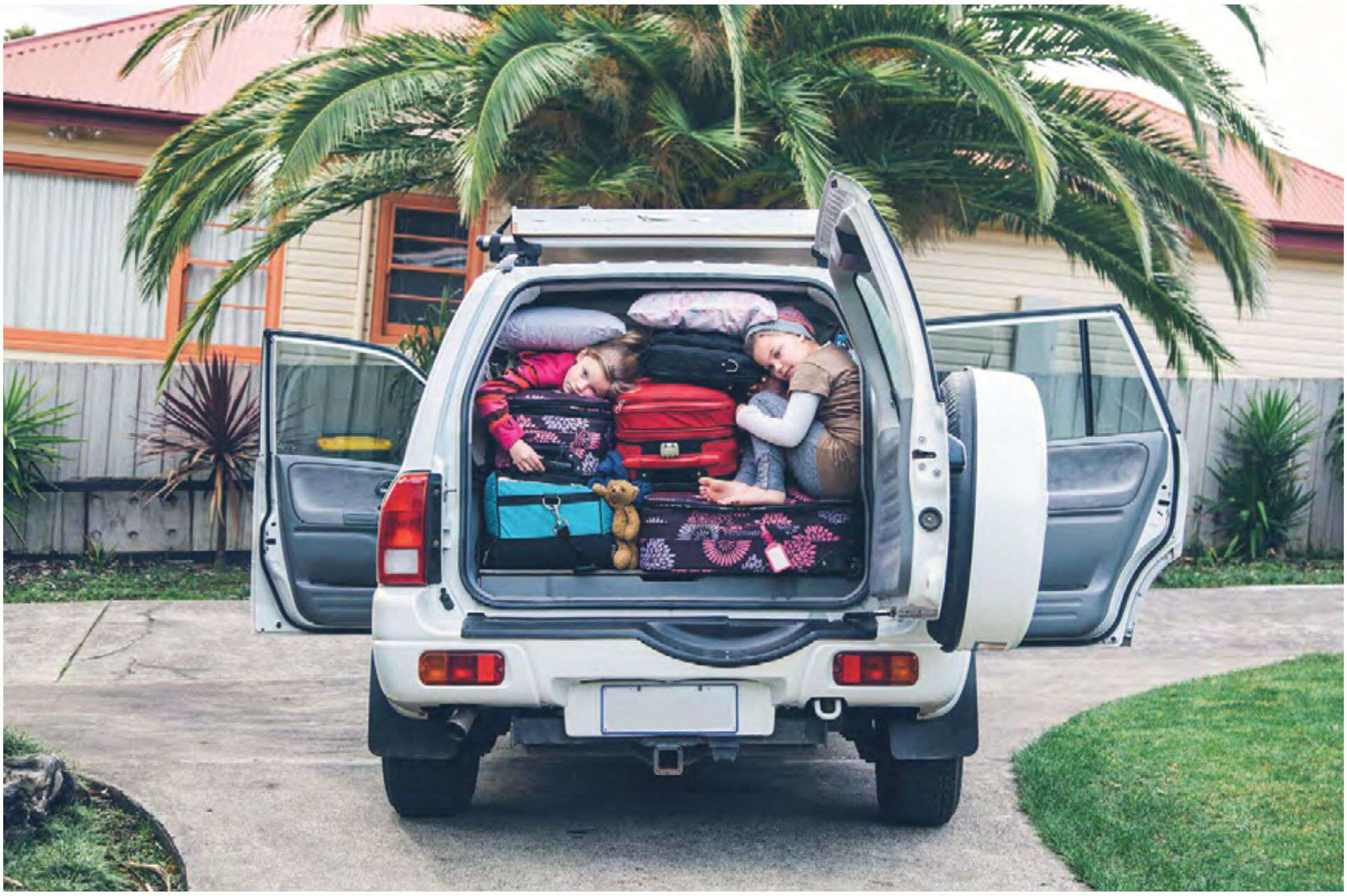
# PHOTO FINISH

YOUR *Funniest* CAPTIONS



JODIE GRIGGS/GETTY IMAGES

**Winner**

First year at clown-car college.
—BRUCE MERECKI *Silver City, New Mexico*

**Runners-Up**

The Sardine family packs for its next vacation.
—ROBERT CARR *Toms River, New Jersey*

"My boyfriend warned me he had a lot of baggage from his last relationship, but I wasn't expecting this!"
—SUSAN YANGUAS *Ellicott City, Maryland*

*To enter an upcoming caption contest, see the photo on* **PAGE 119**.

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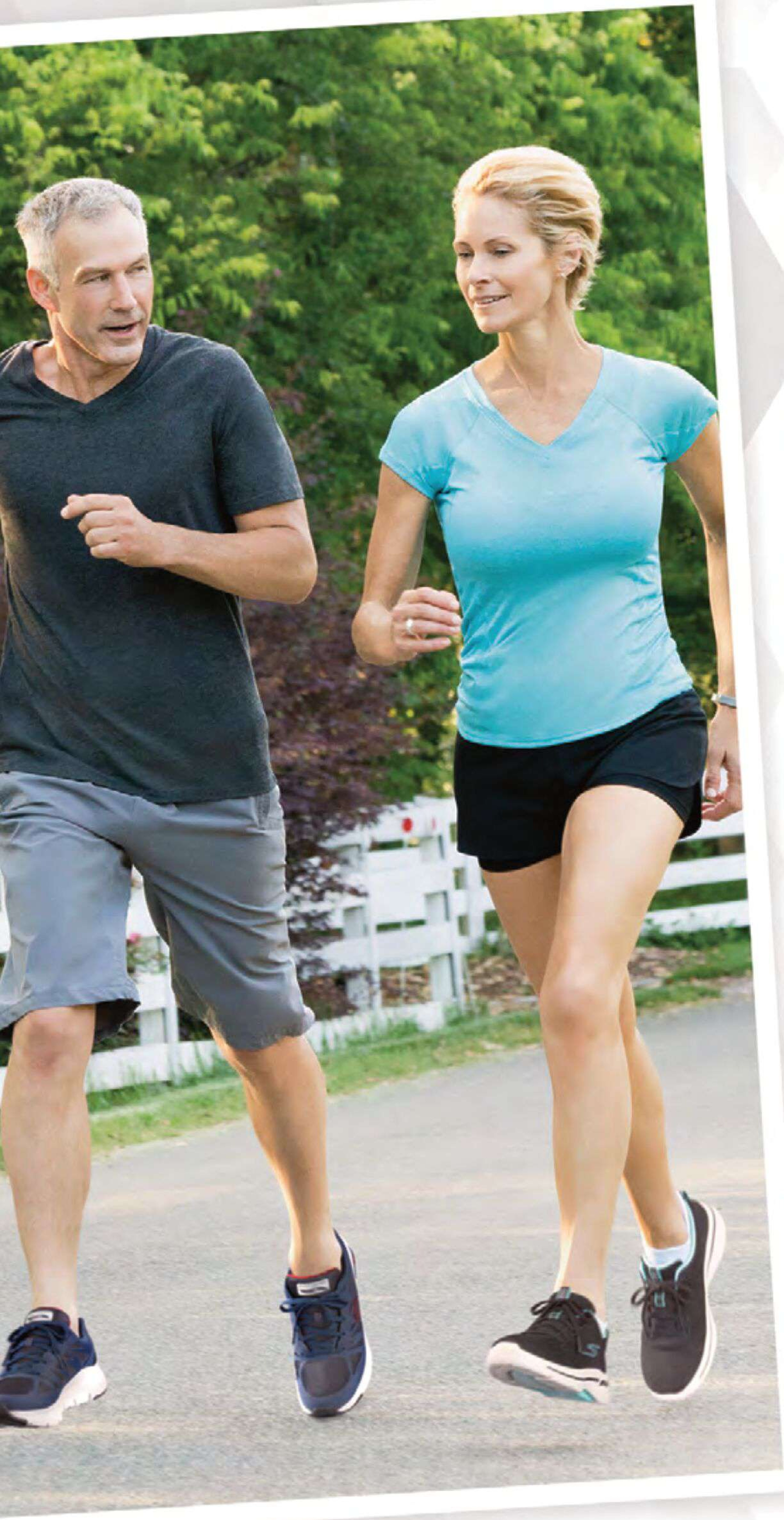

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